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OUTLINES  
OF THE  
LIFE OF OUR LORD

BY THE  
REV. FRANCIS E. GIGOT, S. S.

PART I

UP TO THE BEGINNING OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

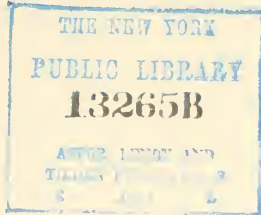
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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE.

#### § I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. **What is the New Testament?** The New Testament is a part of the Bible, *i. e.*, of the collection of writings recognized as Holy Writ by the Church of God. These writings are seventy-two in number, forty-five of which, written before Christ, are called the Old Testament, whilst the other twenty-seven, written since our Lord's coming, make up the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> The most intimate connection exists between the Old and New Testaments: this connection extends alike to doctrines revealed, facts recorded, customs described and even expressions used.<sup>2</sup>

Equally intimate is the connection between the books of the New Testament and the historical records of the Church. Indeed, they form the most valuable part of these records, for (1) they alone make known to us the life and work of our Lord and His first disciples, their actions and their teachings; (2) they alone were written under that special guidance of the Holy Ghost, which is called **Inspiration**, and in virtue of which they are truly the **Word of God**.

In this inspired Record, we find not only the reliable history of the early years of Christianity, we also possess the distinct expression of the New Law to which all Christians must conform their thoughts, aims and actions, and this

<sup>1</sup> See: Vigouroux, Manuel Biblique, iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen, Introduction to Commentary on the Gospels, p. cxxxi. (translation Kendrick, 1857).

because the special object of the New Testament is to give us a higher and clearer knowledge of God, as well as positive directions to unite ourselves more and more to Him; in other words, the New Testament is the authentic rule of Christian belief and conduct.<sup>1</sup>

2. **Various Aspects of the New Testament.** The New Testament presents as many different aspects as the various objects for which it may be studied.

If we look upon the New Testament as upon a Text whose authenticity, integrity and veracity are to be determined by patient investigation, and whose primitive purity is to be restored through scientific means, we consider it from a **Critical** standpoint. If we study the New Testament with a view to discover the exact meaning of the passages before us, we make what may be called the **Textual** or **Exegetical** study. If we examine special texts for the purpose of substantiating certain points of Theology, we make what is called the **Theological** study: **doctrinal**, if referring to truths to be believed; **moral**, if to duties to be fulfilled. If we study the New Testament in order to draw a record of the past events mentioned in its component parts, and ascertain their relation with contemporary history, we make a **Historical** study. As all serious Biblical learning presupposes an accurate knowledge of the facts, the **Historical** is preparatory for all the other kinds of study.

3. **Division of the New Testament.** The New Testament is naturally divided into two great sections: the Gospels and the Epistles. To the former we add the historical Book of the Acts of the Apostles, to the latter the Apocalypse.

Our historical inquiries will be confined to a careful study of the Gospels.

<sup>1</sup> Angus, *The Bible Handbook*, p. 551 (1860).



## § 2. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE GOSPELS.

**4. Notion.** The Gospels are substantially four distinct narratives of the life of our Lord, embodying His principal doctrines.

They are, first of all, biographical sketches illustrating some phases of His incomparable Life and Character, selected and written with a view to meet the wishes and needs of various classes of readers. But, besides the facts they relate with a wonderful simplicity, and which consist in the ordinary actions of our Divine Master, in His wonderful miracles, etc., the Gospels make known to us His sublime doctrine. His recorded utterances are now long discourses, now rapid and familiar reflections, now beautiful comparisons and striking parables. The combination of this two-fold element leaves upon the mind of the thoughtful reader a most forcible conviction of the superhuman character of Jesus.

**5. Peculiarities of the Gospels.** The Gospels are narratives very unlike history or biography, ancient or modern.

In ordinary history or biography, the circumstances of time and place rule the narration; in the Gospels, it is the spiritual import or some other aim which predominates. The strict chronological sequence is not the standard of the arrangement of facts. Definite marks of time and place are scarce: the dates of Christ's birth, baptism and death are alike involved in uncertainty.<sup>1</sup>

No less striking than this absence of chronological order, is the fact that the Gospels do not aim at completeness. Of the first thirty years of our Lord's life on earth, there is hardly any record. Just one fact, recorded by St. Luke alone, offers a glimpse of His holy childhood. With His

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, chap. vii.

baptism opens a more detailed narrative of His life. But even here, general formulas (cfr. John ii, 23 ; xx, 30 ; Luke iv, 14 ; Mark i, 39 ; etc.), summing up entire categories of facts and discourses, prove that each Evangelist simply purposed to give to his contemporaries, after a special design of his own, an extract of the deeds and teachings of the God-Man.<sup>1</sup> This incompleteness explains to us one of the aims of the **Apocryphal Gospels**, viz., to complete the four canonical narratives by means of fragmentary stories or traditions which were abroad in the early years of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

6. **Resemblances and Differences of the Gospels.**<sup>3</sup> It is easy to recognize a close connection between the first three Gospels. Their records may be arranged and harmonized, section by section, in a tabular form because they are mainly based on a common outline. Hence their common name of **Synoptic Gospels**, by which they are distinguished from the fourth Gospel, which is not adapted to such an arrangement.

The Synoptists agree in their general **plan**: the history of our Lord's infancy is found in St. Matthew and St. Luke only, but they all three follow afterwards the same outline. They agree also in the **incidents** which they narrate. Thus, whilst Jesus healed a great multitude of the sick, the Synoptists always select the same cases for fuller record ; His utterances, in like manner, must have been very numerous, but the first three Gospels agree in reporting the same discourses. Coincidence is also found in the **form** in which the several incidents are presented, and even in the **language** used. On the other hand, together with all these resemblances,

<sup>1</sup> **The Speaker's Bible**, On St. Matt., p. 8, sq. **Fr. Fillion**, Introduction générale aux Evangiles, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> **B. H. Cooper**, The Apocryphal Gospels : Introduction. **Fr. Vigouroux**, Manuel Biblique, iii, n. 45 ; i, n. 67. **Fr. Fillion** Introduction générale aux Evangiles, p. 108, sq.

<sup>3</sup> **Fr. Fillion**, *ibid*, p. 28, sq. **Westcott**, Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, chap. iii. **Gloag**, Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels, pp. 3-9, 22-42.

there are significant differences which pervade the contents and language of the first three Gospels.

The Gospel of St. John narrates but a few incidents in common with the Synoptists. Differently from them, it describes almost exclusively our Lord's ministry in Judæa ; and whilst it omits the long and important discourses which are found in St. Matthew and St. Luke, it alone records conversations and discourses of the greatest moment (cfr. John vi, viii, xiv-xvii).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **The Speaker's Bible**, On St. Matt., Introduction, p. viii.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

1. **Various Names.** Palestine, the scene of Gospel history, has in different ages been designated by the following names: 1, the land of **Chanaan**; 2, the land of **Promise**; 3, the land of **Israel**; 4, the land of **Juda** or **Judæa**; 5, the **Holy** land; 6, **Palestine**. This last, by far the most common name, was originally applied by the Hebrews merely to the strip of maritime plain inhabited by their encroaching neighbors; but ultimately it became the usual appellation for the whole country of the Jews.

2. **Site and Size.** Palestine lies between the  $31^{\circ}$  and  $33^{\circ}30'$  of north latitude, and between the  $34^{\circ}20'$  and  $36^{\circ}10'$  of east longitude. In the time of Christ it was limited on the west by Phenicia and the Great Sea; on the south by the Brook of Egypt, the Negeb, the south end of the Dead Sea, and the River Arnon; on the east by Arabia; on the north by Anti-Lebanon, Lebanon and Phenicia. Its situation in the temperate zone, in the centre of the ancient world, has often been admired: it combined, with a sufficient isolation from heathen influences, a position well suited to the spread of the true faith among mankind.

As many countries which have played a great part in the

<sup>1</sup> For this chapter, see: **Horne**, Introduction to the Scriptures; **Dixon**, General Introduction to the Scriptures, part ii; Bible Dictionaries — **Smith**, **Schaff**, **Easton**; **Stanley**, Sinai and Palestine; The Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine; etc.

world's history, Palestine is a very small country. Its average length is about 150 miles, and its average breadth west of the Jordan a little more than 40 miles, east of the Jordan a little less than 40 miles. The total area between the Jordan and the Great Sea is about 6,600 square miles; the portion east of the Jordan has an area of about 5,000 or perhaps 6,000 square miles, — making the whole area of Palestine 12,000 or 13,000 square miles, or about equal to the two States of Massachusetts and Connecticut together.

3. **Principal Divisions.** In the time of Christ Palestine was divided into four principal regions: three west of the Jordan, viz., **Judæa**, **Samaria**, **Galilee**; one east of the Jordan, viz., **Peræa**.

Of those regions, **Judæa** was the most distinguished. It extended along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea almost as far north as Mount Carmel, although on the northeast its limit did not extend quite as far as Sichem. Its southern part formed a portion of **Idumæa**, and it extended westward from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean. It was about 40 miles wide, and was divided into eleven districts, whose metropolis was Jerusalem.

North of **Judæa** lay **Samaria**, which derived its name from the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Israel. Its three chief cities were Samaria, Sychar and Antipatris.

North of Samaria was **Galilee**, 50 miles long by 20 to 25 miles wide. It was divided into **Upper** or **Northern**, and **Lower** or **Southern**, Galilee.

**Peræa** lay beyond the Jordan. Besides **Peræa Proper** and the **Decapolis**, it included the six following districts: **Galaad**, **Batanea**, **Gaulanitis**, **Ituræa**, **Trachonitis**, and **Abilene**.

To these four great regions of Palestine the Romans had added **Idumæa**.

**4. General Aspect and Prominent Features.** The region west of the Jordan — the only part of Palestine with which the Gospel narrative is particularly concerned — is essentially a hilly country. Both slopes of its mass of hills are furrowed by torrent beds. Palestine offers also a remarkable arrangement of plains.

The region west of the Jordan is naturally divided into three long parallel tracts extending north and south :

(1) **Sea-Coast.** This tract is a plain extending without a break from the desert below Gaza to the ridge of Mount Carmel. A great portion of this plain is flat, and naturally fertile. It is intersected by deep gulleys, which have high earthen banks, and through some of which flow perennial streams. The neighborhood of these streams is marshy, especially towards the north of Sharon. The maritime plain is some 80 miles long and from 100 to 200 feet above the sea, with low cliffs near the sea. Towards the north this plain is 8 miles, and near Gaza 20 miles, broad.

(2) **The Hilly Country.** Next to the coast-plain eastward comes the high table-land, which gives to Palestine the aspect of a hilly region. This tract is about 25 miles wide. Its eastern slopes are extremely steep and rugged. The fertility of this highland region improves gradually as one goes northward.

The southern district below Hebron is mostly made up of barren uplands. Passing a little more north into Judæa, we find its central and northern parts scarcely more fertile, for the soil is poor and scanty, and springs are very rare ; its western and northwestern parts being reached by sea-breezes offer a better vegetation, olives abound, and some thickets of pine and laurel are to be noticed ; the eastern part is an uninhabitable tract known as the Wilderness of Judæa.

Passing northward from Judæa to Samaria, the country gradually opens and is more inviting. Its rich plains become gradually larger ; the valleys are tillable and possess springs ;

there are orange-groves and orchards ; the mountains are still bare of wood ; northwest of Nablous, however, the slopes are dotted with fields of corn and tracts of wood.

Proceeding northward we reach Galilee, where we find the plain of Esdrælon, 15 square miles in extent. The vegetation is more luxuriant here than elsewhere west of the Jordan, and springs are abundant. The hills are richly wooded with oaks, maples, poplars ; covered with wild flowers, rich herbage, etc. East of these hills is the rounded mass of Mount Tabor, covered with oaks and contrasting with the bare slopes of the Little Hermon. North of Tabor is the plain **El Buttauf**, of a similar nature to that of Esdrælon, but much more elevated.

(3) **The Jordan Valley.** This valley extends from the base of Mount Hermon to the southern shore of the Dead Sea. Its width varies from one-half a mile to five miles ; at some points it is 12 miles broad. At the foot of Mount Hermon this valley is about 1,000 feet above the sea ; 12 miles below, it is upon the sea-level ; 10 miles farther south, it is still lower by 692 feet ; and 65 miles farther, at the Dead Sea, it is 1,292 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The mountains on either side reach a great altitude, some points being 4,000 feet high. These heights combined with the deep depression of the valley, afford a great variety of temperature, and bring into close proximity productions usually found widely apart.

**Mountains.** Along the coast the only mountain of importance is the ridge of Carmel, the highest point of which is about 1,750 feet. In the hilly region the best-known points of elevation are : Hebron, 3,000 feet ; Mount Olivet, 2,600 feet ; Mounts Ebal and Garizim, 3,000 feet ; Little Hermon and Tabor, 1,900 feet.

**Lowlands.** The three principal lowlands are : 1, the **Maritime plain** subdivided into Philistia, the plain of Sharon, and the plain of Acre ; 2, the plain of **Esdrælon** ; 3, the valley of the **Jordan**.

**Rivers.** The only river worthy the name is the **Jordan**. At the junction of its three principal sources it is 45 feet wide and flows in a channel from 10 to 20 feet below the level of the plain. It traverses successively the lakes of Merom and Gennesareth, and empties itself into the Dead Sea after an actual course of 260 miles, although the distance between its source and the Dead Sea is not more than 136 miles in a straight line. Its width varies from 45 to 180 feet, and its depth from 3 to 12 feet.

Three things are chiefly noticeable in connection with this river, viz.: (1) its enormous fall of nearly 3,000 feet; (2) its endless sinuosities; (3) the absence of towns on its banks. The other streams of Palestine worthy of mention are the **Leontes**, the **Belus**, the **Cison** and the **Zerka**, which flow into the Mediterranean, and the **Jarmuk**, the **Jab-bok** and the **Arnon**, which run into the Jordan from the east.

**Lakes.** The three principal lakes of Palestine are the lake of **Merom**, the **Sea of Galilee** and the **Dead Sea**.



## CHAPTER III.

### POLITICAL CONDITION OF PALESTINE AT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A RAPID survey of the history of the Jews after the Babylonian Captivity is necessary to understand their political and moral condition at the birth of our Lord.

#### § I. JEWISH HISTORY FROM THE CAPTIVITY TO HEROD.

**1. Period of the Restoration.** The Babylonian Captivity was brought to a close in B. C. 536, by the decree of Cyrus (I Esdras i, 1-4); but only a small number of the exiles availed themselves of the permission to return to their desolate country. This first departure took place under the leadership of Zorobabel, a man of royal descent, and appointed governor of Judæa by the Persian monarch. The great concern of the returned Jews was the restoration of the Divine worship to something of its former splendor by the erection of the second Temple; and notwithstanding the long opposition of the Samaritans—whose offer of cooperation in this national work had been previously rejected by the Jews—the sacred edifice was completed and dedicated twenty-one years after it had been begun (B. C. 515; cfr. I Esdras iii-vi).

Eighty years after the first departure from Babylon, a second took place under the leadership of Esdras, a man of priestly descent, and armed with great powers from the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus. His chief object was to

reestablish fully the law of Moses. He succeeded in breaking up unlawful marriages, which had been contracted even by chieftains and priests with foreign women. To his exertions are also ascribed: (1) the institution of the Great Synagogue; (2) the editing of the Book of the Law in the Chaldee character (cfr. I Esdras vii-x).

Thirteen years after Esdras arrived at Jerusalem, Nehemias, a Jewish cup-bearer to the King of Persia, received and carried out the important mission to rebuild the walls of the Holy City. To him is attributed the complete reestablishment of the Jewish constitution. It must be stated, however, that during his absence from Jerusalem many intermarriages with foreigners took place amongst the people. On his last return from Persia he even found that the high priest Eliashib had married his grandson, Manasses, to a daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria. Nehemias at once compelled Manasses to quit the city. Manasses repaired to Samaria, where his father-in-law erected for him a temple on Mount Garizim. Thus began the schismatic worship of the Samaritans, which continued to be maintained there in the times of our Lord (cfr. II Esdras; John iv, 20).

For a considerable time after the death of Nehemias (B. C. 415) the Persians continued masters of Judæa; but nothing of importance has reached us concerning Palestine during their rule. The country was annexed to the satrapy of Syria, and seems to have been prosperous under the government of the Jewish high priests acting under the Syrian satraps.

**2. Rule of the High Priests.** Upon the overthrow of the Persian army by Alexander, Syria fell under his power, and Tyre was taken after an obstinate resistance. Alexander then marched into Palestine to punish the Jews, who, out of respect for their oath to the King of Persia, had granted the Tyrians supplies of provisions, but refused them

to himself. Josephus (*Antiq. of the Jews*, xi, chap. viii) relates that as the Greek conqueror approached Jerusalem and saw a solemn procession of the people coming to meet him headed by the high priest Jaddus, God turned his heart to spare and favor them. He allowed them the free enjoyment of their laws and religion, and when he built the city of Alexandria, he placed a great number of Jews there, and gave them the same privileges as his Greek subjects (B. C. 332-323).

On the division of Alexander's empire, Judæa ultimately formed a part of the monarchy of Egypt (B. C. 301). The Ptolemies were generally favorable to the Jews, at least to those who had settled in Egypt, and the **Septuagint**, or Greek translation of the Pentateuch made for their use, and with which the name of Ptolemy Philadelphus is traditionally connected, proves that the Jews had become very numerous and influential in that country. The Jews of Palestine enjoyed a high degree of prosperity under their hereditary high priests, and particularly under **Simon the Just** (cfr. *Ecclus.* i, 1-4). Signs of decadence however soon appeared after his death, and no less than three parties divided the commonwealth (B. C. 301-203).

After the Jewish nation had been tributary to the Egyptians for about a hundred years, it became subject, in the reign of **Antiochus the Great**, to the Kings of Syria. It retained its own laws and was governed by the High Priest and Council of the nation. But the internal divisions increased and the contest for the high priesthood under **Seleucus IV**, and during the first years of **Antiochus IV, Epiphanes**, became one for wealth and power in which each sought to outbid the others in bribing the foreign ruler. The aim of the last-named Syrian King was manifestly to root out all the Jewish customs and ceremonies by the introduction of Grecian manners and idolatry. For this purpose, he did not hesitate to start a frightful persecution

against the Jews faithful to Jehovah, and for three years and a half they were deprived of their civil and religious liberties and tracked like wild beasts. At length, God raised up a deliverer for His people in the noble family of the Asmoneans (B. C. 168).

**3. The Machabees.** The father of this family was the priest Mathathias who dwelt at Modin, west of Jerusalem. When the emissaries of Antiochus came to him, urging him to conform to the pagan worship, he declared that he would ever remain faithful to his God ; and seeing a Jew ready to offer a sacrifice to the gods at the heathen altar, he fell upon him and killed him. Then running through the city, Mathathias and his sons called upon all who loved their country and were zealous for the Law of the Lord, to rebel against Syria. Numbers flocked to his standard and sought refuge in the wilderness of Judæa (B. C. 168). A war ensued in which Mathathias met with signal success, destroying the idolatrous altars and restoring the observance of the Law. But his advanced age was ill suited to the fatigues of active service. He died and was buried at Modin (B. C. 166).

He left five sons after him, viz: John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan. They pursued the war of independence with varied success, but at length the national Jewish independence was secured by Simon Machabeus (143 B. C.).

The title of King was assumed however only by Aristobulus I, the second successor of Simon Machabeus. Such was the origin of the last Jewish dynasty which in its outward relations kept up carefully a friendly intercourse with the Roman Republic, subjugated Samaria, and profiting by the distracted state of affairs in Syria, conquered the neighboring enemies of the Jews, Moab, Galaad, Ammon, and in particular Idumæa. One of the chief features of the period is the rapid development of the Jewish rival sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who wielded a considerable politi-

cal influence in the state, and who later on combined their forces against the work and person of our Divine Lord.

At the death of Queen Alexandra (B. C. 69) the Pharisaic party immediately placed Hyrcanus II on the throne. But his younger brother Aristobulus at the head of the Sadducees caused him to resign and assumed the title of Aristobulus II. Hence arose a lengthened strife between the two brothers, who finally appealed to the great Pompey then in the East. The wary **imperator** kept the cause in abeyance for some time, and then marched into Palestine, dethroned Aristobulus, whom with his family he took to Rome to grace his triumphal march. Hyrcanus, deprived of the royal diadem, was recognized as high priest and ethnarch of **Judæa proper** which henceforth became tributary to Rome as a part of the government of Syria (B. C. 63).

## CHAPTER IV.

### POLITICAL CONDITION OF PALESTINE AT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

#### § 2. HEROD THE GREAT.

1. **History of Herod before his Accession to the Jewish Throne.** The Herodian family took its rise in Idumæa, a district conquered and converted to Judaism by John Hyrcanus I (135-105 B. C.). The founder of this family was Antipas who was made Governor of Idumæa by Alexander Jannæus (+78 B. C.), and who was succeeded in this office by his son Antipater, the father of Herod the Great. The ambitious Antipater successfully interfered in the unhappy strife between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, and became the virtual ruler of Judæa, with Hyrcanus II as a mere puppet in his hands.

When Pompey was finally defeated by Julius Cæsar at Pharsalia (B. C. 48) the prospects of Antipater and Hyrcanus seemed dark. But they quickly changed sides, and timely help given to Julius Cæsar in Egypt brought to Antipater the title of Procurator of Judæa (B. C. 47). His two sons became governors: the elder, **Phasælus**, of Jerusalem; the younger, **Herod**, only 25 years old, of Galilee. Herod was a man of keen intellect, strong will and ruthless ambition. He was noted as a fearless rider, and no one threw the spear so straight to the mark or shot his arrow so constantly into the centre. In Galilee he soon displayed the energy which ever characterized him. He crushed a guerrilla warfare, put

to death its leader and nearly all his associates. This aroused the indignation of the patriots of Jerusalem, and Herod, as professing the Jewish religion, was summoned to appear before the great Sanhedrin, for having arrogated to himself the power of life and death. He appeared, but escaped condemnation through the interference of Hyrcanus.

On the murder of Julius Cæsar (B. C. 44), and the possession of Syria by Cassius, Antipater and Herod again changed sides, and in return for substantial services, Herod was recognized as governor of Coele-Syria. When the battle of Philippi (B. C. 41) placed the Roman world in the hands of Antony and Octavius, the former obtained Asia. Once more, Herod knew how to gain the new ruler, and he became **tetrarch** of Judæa.

Forced, the following year, by an irruption of the Parthians who had espoused the cause of his rival Antigonus, to abandon Jerusalem, he first betook himself to Egypt and then to Rome. There he was declared King of Judæa by the Roman senate, and preceded by the consuls and the magistrates, he walked in procession between Antony and Octavius to the Capitol, where the usual sacrifices were offered and the decree formally laid up in the archives.

After an absence of barely three months, Herod was again in Palestine, where at the head of an army he soon made himself master of Galilee. He next set himself at work to take the Holy City. But before investing it — which he did in the early spring of B. C. 37 — he repaired to Samaria to wed the unfortunate Machabean princess, Mariamne, betrothed to him five years before. The uncle of that ill-fated queen was Antigonus, whom Herod now besieged in Jerusalem. After a siege of six months Jerusalem fell, and a fearful scene of carnage ensued upon the taking of the city. At length Herod, by rich presents, induced the Romans to leave Jerusalem carrying Antigonus with them (June, 37 B. C.).



2. **The Reign of Herod the Great.** The Idumæan Herod now ascended the throne of Judæa. The first years of his reign (B. C. 37-25) were spent in bloody endeavors to consolidate his power. Antigonus was executed, together with forty-five of his more prominent partisans. The aged Hyrcanus, who had taken refuge among the Parthians, was induced by the most solemn promises of protection to return to Jerusalem, and was then assassinated. Aristobulus, the grandson and successor of Hyrcanus in the priesthood, was drowned at Jericho by the orders of Herod, and even Mariamne — the only wife for whom Herod ever bore a real affection — fell a victim to her husband's blind jealousy. The next victim whom the tyrant suspected of plotting against his throne was Alexandra, his mother-in-law. And when, at length, he discovered concealed with his brother-in-law, the sons of Babas, distant relatives of the Asmonean family, whom he had long sought for in vain, he had them put to death together with their protector. Only then did he feel sure that no Asmonean would endanger his possession of the Jewish throne.

Meanwhile, Herod neglected nothing to keep up friendly relations with Rome. To please his then all-powerful patron, Antony, he gave up to Cleopatra — who exercised a controlling influence over Antony — a valuable part of his dominions, the fertile district of Jericho. Upon the fall of Antony at Actium (B. C. 31) he succeeded in making a friend of Octavius on the island of Rhodes. Not only did this new patron confirm him in his Kingdom, but he greatly enlarged it. When Herod sent his two elder sons by Mariamne to Rome for their education, he received from Octavius a new increase of territory, and afterwards was appointed procurator of the province of Syria, and with such authority that his colleagues in command could take no step without his concurrence.

To establish himself still more in the favor of Augustus,



Herod imitated him in great works of peace. He erected a theatre within, and an amphitheatre without, the walls of Jerusalem, built for himself a magnificent palace in the upper city, restored and enlarged the citadel, which he named **Antonia**, after his former patron. Outside of Jerusalem, he raised Samaria from its ruins, fortified it, adorned it with a temple and called it **Sebaste** (Augusta), in honor of the emperor. Among other cities which he built or adorned must chiefly be noticed **Cæsarea**, which he made a stately city and a safe harbor on the Mediterranean coast. His munificence extended beyond his own dominions. In Damascus, Sidon, and even in Greece, great monuments were erected or restored, either at his cost or by his liberal support.

More important, however, than all his other works, was the rebuilding of the **Temple** of Jerusalem, which became the greatest national glory of the Jews.

In imitation of Augustus, Herod patronized men of letters and many Greeks were put in offices of trust or honor. But all the splendor of his palace, and all the literary culture of his court, should not make us forget the fears, intrigues and heart-burnings which must have been caused by his suspicious temperament, and by his practice of polygamy. The upper classes lost much of their hereditary power, although the High Priests continued to form an influential aristocracy.

Amidst all his power and glory, Herod himself realized how far he was from enjoying the good-will of his subjects at large. He knew that they murmured over his introduction of foreign and heathen practices, his arbitrary setting up and deposition of the High Priests, his enormous taxation and prodigal expenditure, and his terrible severity against his opponents. Hence, he several times attempted to pacify the people by truly generous and liberal deeds; but their gratitude did not last long, and time and again serious conspiracies endangered his life.

Under Herod, Jerusalem remained, it is true, the religious centre of the dispersed Jews. From the Holy City, all the sections of the Jewish world received the teachings of their fathers, the regulations for the feast days, etc.; and to the Holy City, they regularly travelled in hundreds of thousands, bearing their yearly tribute and anxious to worship Jehovah within the sacred precincts of the Temple. Yet it was plain to all, that this religious preëminence was contrary to the wishes of the King. As far as he dared, he was the ostentatious patron of heathenism. Not only did he tolerate idolatry in the far-away districts east of the Jordan, but he started or encouraged it all around the central district of Paestine, and to some extent within its limits. Gaza, Ascalon, Dora, Cæsarea, Joppe, Ptolemais and Samaria were desecrated by heathen temples, altars, idols and priests: it seems as if the throne of David existed only to spread heathenism.

The last period of Herod's reign (B. C. 15-4) was disgraced by scenes of bloodshed still more awful than those which darkened its first years, and the history of his domestic affairs is that of a long succession of intrigues and murders. Antipater, his eldest son by his former wife Doris, accused his step-brothers Alexander and Aristobulus of wishing to avenge upon Herod the death of Mariamne their mother. Antipater was believed, as well as the court people whom the accuser had won over, and who were constantly inventing new reports. Accusations and reconciliations now alternated with each other; but the calumnies did not cease in the King's palace till Alexander and Aristobulus were strangled by his order at Sebaste (B. C. 7). A multitude of Pharisees, with some of the courtiers who had conspired against Herod in favor of Pheroras, his brother, were put to death. Upon further inquiry, the death of Pheroras brought to light the whole secret history of years. He had died by taking poison sent by Antipater to despatch Herod. Even the second Mariamne—the daughter of Simon, the High

Priest — was proved to have been privy to the plot, and her son Philip was, on this account, blotted out of his father's will (B. C. 5). Antipater, now unmasked, was handed over for trial to the Syrian proprætor. Easily convicted, he was led away in chains. At last, the strong nature of Herod gave way under such revelations, a deadly illness seized him, and soon word ran through Jerusalem that he was no more. At once, riots took place; but the troops were turned out and the unarmed rioters scattered: many who had been seized were put to death.

Antipater was executed only five days before his father's death. Herod died in the seventieth year of his age (750 U. C.).

At the news of the tyrant's death, a frightful anarchy prevailed in Palestine. The popular voice, backed up by tumult and riot, clamored for the redress of various grievances. The Roman officials seized upon the treasures of the late King, and insurrection followed upon insurrection against them. Even the troops of Herod wandered about in bands, plundering as they pleased, and false Messiahs appeared who assumed the diadem and gathered troops of bandits. A large number of the Jews had been so disgusted with the Herodian rule, that they sent five hundred of their number to Augustus to ask him not to ratify the will of Herod, and to suppress the royal authority in Judæa.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAS AMONG THE JEWS.

1. **Meaning of the term Messiah.** The term "Messias" is derived from the passive participle of the Hebrew verb "to anoint," and means the "Anointed one." For centuries, it was the official title of the Jewish monarch, till it was restricted to denote the future Deliverer of the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup>

2. **The Hope of the Messiah.** The Messianic hope originated in the general promise of deliverance made after the fall, and up to the Babylonian captivity, was gradually developed and centered in a person invested with characteristics in harmony with the aspirations of the times. Thus to Abraham, the Messiah was promised as a source of blessing for all nations; to Juda, as a great chieftain; to Moses, as the author of a new dispensation. Under the kings, he was described as a monarch whose holy rule should extend over all nations, and perhaps, also, as a mysterious sufferer who, by dying, should atone for the sins of the people.

In the **canonical** books written during and after the Exile, we find new and still more distinct features of the Messiah delineated. Among them we may notice the appellations of "Son of man," of "Desired of all nations," applied to him; again, the priestly and royal offices are represented as combined in his person; and in the Book of Wisdom (ii, 11-20), there is a vivid description of the persecutions

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Gloag, *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 49.

which he would have to undergo at the hands of his contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

The popular ideal of the Messiah is embodied chiefly in the **apocryphal** writings which were composed towards the end of the period which extends from the Captivity to Herod.<sup>2</sup> The principal of these compositions are the **Sibylline books**, the **book of Enoch**, and the **Psalter of Solomon**. These apocryphal writings bear the unmistakable impress of the time when they were composed. The might and tyranny of heathen oppressors served only to suggest the certain retribution and just vengeance which hung over them. A personal Messiah was expected to restore national glory, and a splendid destiny was promised to the Jewish race. The people were thus led to expect better times, but also to expect them upon earth, and in earthly things, rather than in spiritual advantages.

The Messianic hope culminated in the period which extends from Herod to the death of our Lord. Under the rule of the Idumæan Herod and of heathen Rome, the people got most restless, and inspired by the dreams of glory described in their apocryphal literature, looked forward with the greatest eagerness to the coming of the son of David. False Messiahs made their appearance at the very moment of our Lord's stay in Egypt, and the message of St. John the Baptist gave a new impulse to the general belief that the Messiah was at hand, and indeed changed it into an assured hope. Not only the New Testament is full of references to such an expectation (Matt. xi, 3; John vii, 26 sq.; Luke i, 39; ii, 25; etc.), but even pagan writers bear witness to it (Tacitus, *Hist.* v, 13; Suetonius, *Vesp.* 4; cfr. also Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* vi, chap. v, § 4).

<sup>1</sup> See **Westcott**, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, chap. ii; **Gloag**, *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 124, sq.; **Vigouroux**, *Manuel Biblique*, vol. 2d; **Ch. Elliott**, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 223, sq.

<sup>2</sup> See **Westcott**, *loc. cit.*; **Emil Schurer**, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, second division, § 29; **Seidel**, *In the Time of Jesus*, pp. 147-162; **Fouard**, *Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, i, p. 13, sq.

According to the general belief of the time, the Messiah was to be primarily a political leader, a mighty deliverer, and also a restorer of the Jewish institutions in their primitive purity. He would be a descendant of David, born in Judæa, and start a world-wide empire, of which Jerusalem would be the capital, and in which the sons of Abraham would be superior both in temporal and spiritual matters. To be admitted into this Messianic Kingdom it was sufficient for the Jews to observe the enactments of the Mosaic law, to which the Messiah would himself be subjected. A large number of the Jews believed that if the nation was once engaged in such an extreme conflict with the Romans that the Holy City and the Temple would be threatened with destruction, the Messiah must needs appear.<sup>1</sup>

Our Lord confirmed the current Messianic belief in several points, such as for example, the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, its administration under one of the house of David, the judgment attending its introduction, etc.; but, He also corrected them in other points, and opened to His contemporaries a wholly new field of Messianic truth, when He spoke to them of the mystery of His Person, and of His prerogative to be a source of the new and eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

**3. The Precursor of the Messiah.** Herod was still living (Luke i, 5) when the birth of the precursor of the Messiah was foretold (Oct. 6, B. C. ; 748 U. C.). Elizabeth, his mother, and Zachary, his father, were both of priestly race. They were pious and devout persons, but they had no child, — a heavy misfortune, because it cut off all hope of the birth of the Messiah in their family, and because also it was regarded as often involving a moral reproach and as being a punishment for sin.

When the days of the ministration of the priestly course of Abia, to which Zachary belonged, had come, he repaired to

<sup>1</sup> Dollinger, *Paganisme et Judaïsme*, iv, p. 156, sq.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, *God's Revelations of Himself to Men*, p. 252, sq.

Jerusalem to carry out whatever duties might be assigned to him by lot. To burn incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place was the most honorable of the functions of the simple priests, and it now fell to the lot of Zachary. During this ceremony,<sup>1</sup> the people waited in the court of Israel praying in silence till the priest should reappear; and, as a rule, the priest never tarried in the Holy Place longer than was absolutely necessary. On that day, the people waited long for Zachary, and when he came out he was speechless; hence, all understood that something extraordinary had happened. He had had a vision which is recorded in St. Luke i, 11-20, and during which he was told by the angel Gabriel that Elizabeth should bear him a son whom he should call **John**, and who would be the holy precursor of the Messiah.

The unbelief of Zachary at the voice of the angel had been punished by a temporary dumbness; and at the end of his week's work he departed to his own house (Luke i, 21-23).

Elizabeth conceived a son, and in the sixth month of her pregnancy received the visit of Mary, the mother of her Lord. In due time a child was born to Elizabeth, and on the eighth day after his birth he underwent the rite of the circumcision in which he received the name of John, as foretold by the angel (Luke i, 24-26, 39-45, 57-63). It was on the day of the circumcision of his son, that Zachary recovered his power of speech, and uttered a beautiful canticle known as the "**Benedictus**," from its first word in the Latin Vulgate. It is essentially a Messianic hymn, Hebraic in its language and conceptions. In a first part (Luke i, 68-75) Zachary, speaking as a *priest*, praises God for the realization of all the Messianic hopes created by the prophets of the Old Testament; in the second part (verses 76-79), speaking as a *father*, he addresses his son as destined to exercise a preparatory ministry to the Lord.

A single verse of St. Luke (i, 80) refers to the bodily,

<sup>1</sup> It is well described by Fouard, vol. 1, p. 19, sq.



mental and spiritual developments of the son of Zachary during his preparation for his great work in Israel: "And the child grew up and was strengthened in spirit, and he was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation in Israel." The "deserts" here spoken of are no other than the **Wilderness** or eastern portion of Judæa proper.<sup>1</sup> This wilderness is a tract of some nine or ten miles in width, by about 35 in length. It is a dreary waste of rocky valleys; in some parts, stern and terrible — the rocks having been cleft and shattered by earthquakes into rifts and gorges sometimes 1,000 feet in depth, though only 30 or 40 in width; in other parts, stretching out in bare chalk hills full of caves, or in white flint-bound ridges and winding muddy wadies. One may travel all day and see no other life than the desert partridge and a chance fox or vulture. Only the dry and fleshy plants which require no water grow on the hills, and in the valleys the most luxuriant vegetation is the white broom brushes which blossom in March and April.

In this desolate region, which the Hebrews fitly called "*the horror*," St. John took his abode, most likely in some cave in the depth of a gorge, to shelter himself from the glare of an Eastern sun. His food consisted of locusts which leaped and flew on the bare hills, and of honey which wild bees deposited in the clefts of the rocks. Thus, far from a corrupt world, in silence and prayer, he prepared himself for the difficult mission which was to be entrusted to him. He became able to authoritatively rebuke the love of riches by depriving himself of all comforts, to condemn the hollowness and unreality of life of his contemporaries by clearing himself of all suspicion of them. In fact, when he made his public appearance, all did homage to his self-denying austerity.

<sup>1</sup> Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*, chap. xxiv.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INCARNATION.

1. **The Annunciation.** Six months after his appearance to Zachary, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to **Nazareth**, an humble village unknown and unnamed in the Old Testament, and hidden away among the hills of **Galilee**. It is there, that far from their ancestral seat, lived Joseph and Mary who were both of the tribe of Juda and the house of David; and it is to Mary, "a virgin espoused to Joseph," that the angel was directed. The precise place<sup>1</sup> where he visited her is not indicated in the Gospel; but the Latin tradition, which affirms that he found Mary in a grotto over which stood the house which was ultimately carried by angels into Italy, agrees with the expression used in the inspired record: "And the angel being *come in*."

The narrative which followed (Luke i, 28-38) is as simple and unpretentious as a legend of oriental imagination would have been gorgeous and hyperbolic. The angel appeared probably under the form of a man (cfr. Daniel ix, 21) and saluted Mary with these remarkable words: "Hail, full of grace," — a translation objected to by Protestant writers, chiefly because of erroneous dogmatic views, — "the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." At these words Mary was troubled; but after bidding her not to fear, Gabriel delivered his wonderful message which summarized the principal Messianic predictions of the Old Testament, and by

<sup>1</sup> **Guerin**, *La Terre Sainte*, i, p. 294. **Andrews**, *Life of Our Lord upon the Earth*, revised edition, pp. 67, 68.

means of which Mary easily understood she was to be the mother of the Messias. But thinking of her vow of virginity, she humbly inquired, "*How shall this be done, because I know not man?*" The angel told her that without the intervention of man, — God by His omnipotence supplying for it, — she would be the virgin-mother of the Son of God. To this he added a suitable sign: the pregnancy of her cousin Elizabeth. Mary then believed in the infinite power of God, and submitted humbly to His eternal designs in these simple words: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.*"

St. John (i, 1-18) makes known to us what took place after this interview. After having contemplated the bosom of the Eternal Father, he describes the Word of God as the Creator of all things, the illuminator of all men. And then, he speaks of the same Word of God, unchangeable in Himself, as assuming a true human nature, a human body and a human soul. This is the great mystery of the Incarnation which was accomplished in the virginal womb of Mary. She conceived a Son, true Son of God and also her true Son; a true man, able to suffer and die to deliver us from sin, and at the same time a true God, so that His actions and sufferings could have an infinite value for our redemption.

Thus the "*Word made flesh*" became for us all a permanent source of grace, and the Mediator of the new and eternal Covenant.

**2. The Visitation** (March-April, 749; 5 B. C.). From St. Luke's statement (i, 39) that "Mary went into the mountainous country *with haste*," it may be inferred that she at once began her journey, even before she informed St. Joseph of her pregnancy. She wished to compliment Elizabeth on her pregnancy revealed to her by the angel, and praise God with her cousin. It is beyond doubt that St. Joseph did not accompany Mary on her journey, but it is not unlikely that

she was accompanied by some of her friends, or a body of neighbors going up to the Pasch.

She went to "*the house of Zachary*" (Luke i, 40) in the hill country of Juda. As the name of the town where Zachary resided is not given, several places have been advanced: (1) **Hebron**, a very ancient city situated in the hill country and which a Jewish tradition points out as St. John's birthplace; (2) **Yuttah**, a town about four or five miles south of Hebron, a priestly town also, but without tradition connecting it with the birth of St. John; (3) **Ain-Kârin**, four miles west of Jerusalem, which Greek and Latin traditions concur in marking as the home of Zachary. The main difficulty about this last place is that the town does not seem to be in that part of Palestine which may be called "the hill country of Juda."<sup>1</sup>

As the distance from Nazareth to Jerusalem is about 80 miles, if Zachary lived at Hebron, about 20 miles farther south, the whole journey would take up four or five days.

The scene on Mary's arrival is very remarkable. It bears the impress of the holiest joy: Mary salutes first her cousin Elizabeth, and at once the yet unborn John leaps for joy and is sanctified in the womb of his mother, whilst Elizabeth herself, filled with enthusiastic joy, proclaims blessed the mother of her Lord. All this is manifestly the result of the presence of our Lord, unseen it is true, but inspiring all. Again, there is a great contrast between the excited enthusiasm of Elizabeth who "*cried out with a loud voice,*" and Mary's canticle which breathes a sentiment of deep and inward repose, in harmony with her more complete and more constant dependence on the Holy Spirit (Luke i, 40-46 a).

The "**Magnificat**" is made up of three stanzas, in the first of which Mary praises God for His benefits to her (verses 46-49); in the second, she praises Him for His

<sup>1</sup> **Andrews**, *Life of Our Lord*, p. 54, sq. **Fouard**, *Life of Jesus Christ*, p. 18, and footnote.

judgments over the world (v, 50-53); in the third, she praises Him for His mercy towards Israel. Commentators justly observe that the expressions of the **Magnificat** being almost entirely borrowed from the Old Testament poetry, Mary could easily give vent to her feelings of gratitude in the poetical form under which they have come down to us.<sup>1</sup>

3. **The Marriage of Our Blessed Lady** (Luke i, 56; Matt. i, 18-25). The marriage customs of the East have ever differed considerably from those in vogue among the Western nations.

After the selection of the bride, the *espousal* or *betrothal* took place, and was a formal proceeding undertaken by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom, and by the parents on the part of the bride. The *wedding* itself was simply the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom. But between the betrothal and the wedding an interval might elapse varying from a few days to a full year for virgins. During this period, the communications between the bride and bridegroom were conveyed by "the friend of the bridegroom," and the bride was considered as a wife, so that any unfaithfulness by her was punishable with death, the husband having, however, the option of putting her away.

It is in the light of these Eastern customs<sup>2</sup> that the marriage of our Blessed Lady as recorded by St. Matthew should be studied.

After an abode of about three months, Mary left the *house of Zachary* (Luke i, 40) to "RETURN TO HER OWN HOUSE" (Luke i, 56). This last expression seems to indicate that Mary, "betrothed" to St. Joseph (Luke i, 87; Matt. i, 18) had not yet been taken to him: "BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER" (Matt. i, 18).

<sup>1</sup> Cfr., for example, Fouard, p. 38, and footnotes. Fillion, St. Luc, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Article **Marriage** in Bible Dictionaries; cfr. also Scripture Manners and Customs, pp. 241-262.

After Mary's return to her own house, her pregnancy was now so advanced, that it was very soon noticed either by her parents or by the friend of the bridegroom: "*She was found with child*," *i. e.*, she was recognized as such, and the fact being ascertained, was made known to Joseph.

Great at this news was the anxiety of Joseph, her husband, — for he was considered as such after the betrothal — and as a "just man," *i. e.*, a faithful observer of the Law, he felt bound to repudiate Mary. This he might do in two ways. He could either summon her before the law courts to be judicially condemned and punished — this course would have "EXPOSED HER PUBLICLY" — or he could choose a milder course: he could put her away by a bill of divorce written before witnesses but without assigning the cause of the divorce; and to this latter course he inclined: "*being not willing to expose her publicly, was minded to put her away privately*" (Matt. i, 19). Whilst thinking on those things, *viz.*, how to put her away, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and manifesting the innocence of Mary, directed him to take her unto himself, *i. e.*, to bring her into his house (Matt. i, 20, 21).

All the details could be fully realized by the Jewish converts for whom the first Gospel was written, and to whom they must have appeared a striking fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaias (vii, 14) quoted by St. Matthew (i, 22, 23).

Joseph, obedient to the Divine command, took Mary his wife unto himself, and gave the child after his birth the divinely appointed name of Jesus (Matt. i, 24). The title of first-born given here to Jesus (Matt. i, 25) was a technical expression applied to all who had a right to the privileges of primogeniture, without regard to the fact that they were or were not the only children of their parents. Finally, the expression: "*he knew her not till she brought forth her first-born son*," is simply equivalent to this: *till the birth of Jesus*, Joseph knew not Mary.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE NATIVITY.

1. **The Birth of Our Lord.** It might have been expected that Mary's child would have been born in Nazareth, but an enrolment prescribed by Augustus made a distant village the birthplace of Jesus (Luke i, 1, sq.). This enrolment was most likely a registration of persons and property, a census which would serve as basis for future taxation; and as St. Luke tells us, it extended throughout the whole Roman empire.

Strong objection has been taken to the statement of the Evangelist that a universal census was carried into effect in Judæa, before the death of Herod. In point of fact, no *explicit* statement can be found in any contemporary writer concerning the taking of a universal census at this time. But many things make it probable that it was actually taken: (1) From his accession to the empire, Augustus was anxious to have a uniform system of taxation applied to the provinces; (2) under him, a census was certainly effected in provinces such as Gaul and Spain; (3) it is well established that he commenced, if he did not carry out, a complete geometrical survey of the empire; (4) several Latin writers (Tacitus, Suetonius) refer to Augustus's *Breviarium Imperii*, i. e., to a little book written out in the hand of the emperor himself, and treating of the number of his soldiers, of the taxes, imposts, etc., of the empire. Under Herod, Judæa was not yet, it is true, a Roman province, but its reduction to that condition sooner or later was already determined.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, pp. 71-82. Fouard, i, p. 41, sq. Farrar, *On St. Luke*, pp. 62-65. Emil Schurer, *Division 1*, vol. ii, pp. 105-143. Maclear, *A Class-Book of the New Testament History*, p. 134, footnote 2.

A still greater difficulty has been found in the statement of St. Luke that this enrolment took place when Cyrinus was governor of Syria, because it seemed to conflict with a fact gathered from other sources, viz., that Cyrinus was governor of that province some ten years later than this. But recent investigations have proved that Cyrinus held this office twice and have made it very probable that it was during his first tenure of it that the census was taken.

In carrying out the imperial edict, Herod was careful not to override the national customs of the Jews, according to which they should be enrolled at the place with which they were connected by the ties of tribe or family. This brought Joseph into Judæa, to the city of David, for as we learn in detail from the two genealogies of our Lord (Matt. i, 1-16; Luke iii, 23-38), Joseph was of the house and family of David (Luke ii, 3-5).

Both genealogies manifestly profess to give the human pedigree of our Lord, and yet they present several important differences. St. Matthew, writing for Jewish Christians, begins with Abraham; St. Luke, writing for Gentile Christians, goes back to Adam, the father of all men. In St. Matthew, the genealogies are introduced by the word "*begot*"; in St. Luke, by the genitive with the ellipsis of the word "*son*." St. Luke gives twenty-one names between David and Zorobabel, whilst St. Matthew gives only fifteen, and all the names, except that of Salathiel, are different. Again, St. Luke gives seventeen generations between Zorobabel and Joseph, whilst St. Matthew gives only nine, and all the names are different. Finally, whilst St. Matthew calls Joseph the son of Nathan, St. Luke calls him the son of Heli.

Two principal theories deserve notice in connection with our Lord's genealogies. The first maintains that St. Luke gives the genealogy of our Blessed Lady, whilst St. Matthew gives that of St. Joseph. This solution would indeed do away with all the differences mentioned above: unfortunately



it has no basis on tradition, and seems opposed to the natural meaning of St. Luke iii, 23. The second theory considers both genealogies as the genealogies of St. Joseph; but whilst St. Matthew shows that our Lord is the son of David by *legal* succession, St. Luke shows that He is the son of David by *natural* succession. According to the second theory, both genealogies ought to be considered as genealogies of Mary also, inasmuch as Mary being either the niece or the first cousin of Joseph, the ancestors of Joseph — both legal and natural — are also her ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

It is at the end of the journey of Joseph to the seat of his ancestors, that Mary — who had accompanied him, because at this delicate and trying period she was unwilling to be left alone at Nazareth — gave birth to Jesus, and this leads us to examine the difficult question of the *date of our Lord's birth*.

To determine approximately the **year** of our Lord's birth, two things must be examined: (1) *the latest date* to which His birth can be assigned; (2) *the earliest date* at which it can be put. The *latest* year to which our Lord's birth can be assigned, is the year 750 U. C.; for on the one hand, St. Matthew tells us that Jesus was born *during* the lifetime of Herod (Matt. ii, 1-6), and not long before his death (ibid. 19); and, on the other hand, Josephus (Antiq. of the Jews, book xvii, chap. viii, 1, and chap. vi, 4) relates facts which prove that the death of Herod took place between the 13th of March and the 4th of April, 750.

The *earliest* year to which our Lord's birth can be assigned is 749 U. C.; for (1) at His baptism a few months before the Pasch of 780 U. C., Jesus was "ABOUT" thirty years of age, and the word "ABOUT" under St. Luke's pen hardly allows us to admit that our Lord was then one full year, more or

<sup>1</sup> For a good discussion of this question, cfr. **Fouard**, *Life of Jesus*, vol. i, appendix iii; **Andrews**, *Life of our Lord*, new edition, 1891, pages 58-65; **Farrar**, *On St. Luke*, appendix ii.



less than thirty; (2) the universal enrolment, which took place in Judæa and occasioned our Lord's birth in Bethlehem, must be put as near as possible to the beginning of the administration of Cyrinus, and Cyrinus was governor from the autumn of 750 to 753 U. C.

Thus, then, the choice remains possible between the latter part of 749 and the beginning of 750 U. C.; the probabilities are in favor of 749 U. C., or five years before the Christian vulgar era.

The **month** in which our Lord was born may be determined in the following manner: From St. Luke (i, 5, 24) it may be gathered that the conception of John the Baptist took place in either of the months April or October, and counting onwards fifteen months, we reach *June* and *December*, in one of which our Lord's birth is to be placed. Now when we bear in mind that in the night our Lord was born the shepherds tended their flocks (Luke ii, 8), it is easy to set aside the month of June because in this month the fields are absolutely parched around Bethlehem, and to select the month of December in which the earth is clothed with rich verdure as the month in which our Lord was born. In fact, an early tradition of the church designates this month as the time of our Lord's birth.

The **day** itself on which Jesus was born is believed to have been the 25th of December, through an immemorial tradition of the Western Church.<sup>1</sup>

In connection with our Lord's birth in Bethlehem (cfr. Luke ii, 4-7) on this memorable 25th of December, 749 U. C., a few details may be added respecting the *town*, the *inn* and the *manger* of Bethlehem. The town is situated about five miles south of Jerusalem, on a narrow ridge running pretty nearly east to west. The slopes of the ridge are in many parts covered by terraced gardens, shaded by rows of olives

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, p. 1-21. A Catholic Dictionary, art., Christmas. Fouard, i, p. 48.

with figs and vines. On the top of the hill lies the village in a kind of irregular triangle, at about 150 yards of the apex of which is the noble basilica of Justinian now surrounded by three convents : Greek, Latin and Armenian. The houses have flat roofs, and the streets are narrow and crooked ; the population is about 8,000 souls.

Bethlehem is reached by the north, and on their arrival Joseph and Mary failed to find accommodation in the inn crowded by earlier comers. An Eastern inn is simply an enclosed space surrounded by open recesses of which the paved floor is raised above the ground. In the centre, there is the courtyard and water for the cattle ; behind, is found the stable, which consists sometimes of a cave of limestone ; and when no place can be had *in* the inn, travellers must be satisfied with a corner in the courtyard or else in the stable. So was it with Joseph and Mary when they reached the inn of Bethlehem, for the manger spoken of by St. Luke (ii, 7) suggests that they either withdrew to the stable of the inn itself, or to some neighboring cave used at the time for the purpose of a stable. The *cave* now shown as the Grotto of the Nativity, is southeast of the town and covered by the Latin convent. It has been modified through ages, and is now thirty-eight feet long by eleven wide and nine feet high. A silver star in a marble slab at the eastern end marks the precise spot where our Lord was born. Here is the inscription : *Hic de virgine Maria, Jesus Christus natus est.* Fine silver lamps are always burning around. The manger was taken to Rome in 1486 by Pope Sixtus V, but a marble one has taken its place (ANDREWS, pp. 83-87).

The tradition, however ancient, which speaks of an *ass* and an *ox* as standing over the crib, is probably without sufficient grounds (cfr. Fouard, vol. i, p. 47, footnote 3).

**2. The Adoration of the Shepherds** (Luke ii, 8-20).  
The first to worship the new-born Savior were poor shepherds

who, on the night of our Lord's birth, tended their flocks in the fields, or on the eastern hills near Bethlehem. A brilliant light suddenly dazzled their eyes, and an angelic voice broke upon their ears. Bidding them not to fear, it announced the birth of the Lord Christ, and gave them a sign whereby they would find Him in the city of David. Instantly a heavenly choir chanted the praises of God, saying :

Glory to God in the highest,  
On earth peace,  
Good will towards men !

Obedient to the heavenly message, the shepherds hastened to make proof of the mysterious sign and found the Babe in the manger.

They became the first preachers of what they saw and heard, to the wonder of those that heard them, and they left the scene, glorifying the God of Israel. "*But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.*"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EIGHTH AND FORTIETH DAYS AFTER THE NATIVITY.

1. **The Eighth Day** (Luke i, 21). Born under the Law (Galat. iv, 4) our Divine Lord willed to comply faithfully with its various prescriptions. Among the various rites it prescribed (Levit. xii, 3) was the religious ceremony of the circumcision which every male child in Israel had to undergo as a sign of its incorporation into the chosen people of God. The rite was to be performed exactly on the eighth day after the birth of the child, even though it were a Sabbath day (John vii, 22, 23). On the eighth day then after His birth, our Lord received in His sacred flesh the bloody incision, the spiritual import of which was death to sin (Deuter. x, 16; xxx, 6; Rom. ii, 28, etc.).

From the brief notice which St. Luke gives to our Lord's circumcision it may be inferred that everything took place with the usual formalities; ten witnesses surrounded the child, whilst the father or some other member of the family with a stone knife made the bloody incision and then pronounced the prescribed blessings.

The place where the ceremony was carried out is not mentioned in the Gospel, but it was most likely either the inn of Bethlehem, or some house where the Magi found our Lord (cfr. Matt. ii, 11), and which St. Joseph had provided as soon as possible for Jesus and Mary.

In connection with the circumcision, our Lord publicly re-

ceived the Name which had been destined for Him by God, the sacred name **Jesus**. This name corresponds to the **Josue** of the Old Testament, and means "JEHOVAH SALVATION": it was given to our Lord to indicate "that He should save His people from their sins." (Matt. i, 21.) The name of **Jesus** is the personal name of our Lord, and that of **Christ** is added to it to identify Him with the expected Messiah. It must be noticed that others besides our Lord have borne the name of Jesus (cfr. for example, in the Old Testament, the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, and in the New Testament, Coloss. iv, 11).

**2. The Fortieth Day** (Luke ii, 22-38). The fortieth day after our Lord's birth was marked by a twofold ceremony (the Purification of our Blessed Lady and the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple) and a twofold meeting (that of Simeon and that of Anna).

(1) **Purification of Our Blessed Lady**. In connection with the birth of a male child, the Jewish Law required that the mother should remain forty days separated from holy things (Levit. xii, 4, sq.), and that at the end of this period she should appear at the Temple with the sacrifice of a yearling lamb for a burnt-offering, and a turtle dove or a young pigeon for a sin-offering. Those who could not afford to bring a lamb, were allowed to offer a turtle dove or a pigeon as a substitute; and it is an evidence of the humble station of Mary that she brought two turtle doves—the offering which was permitted to the poor.

To comply with these requirements of the Law, Mary started for the Temple early on the fortieth day. She had to appear in the *Court of the Women* as soon as the morning incense had been offered. There, her two turtle doves, bought either from the Temple officer, or from the merchants who had changed the *outer Court* into a noisy bazaar, would be taken from her by the Levites into the *Court of the Priests*

to be burned on the altar. After a time, a priest would come with some of the blood, and having sprinkled her with it, would pronounce her clean (GEIKIE, i, chap. x).

(2) **Presentation of Our Lord.** The second ceremony to be gone through on the fortieth day, was prescribed by the Jewish Law in connection with the birth of a *first-born son*. In order to keep alive the remembrance that God had delivered the Hebrews from Egypt by the death of the Egyptian first-born, the Law required that every first-born male should be sacred to Jehovah (Exod. xiii, 2), and after subsequent modifications (Numb. xiii, 12; xviii, 15, 16) it finally prescribed that all the first-born should be presented before the Lord, as a symbolical act of surrender for His service, but they could be redeemed for five shekels (about \$2.85) from the service of the tabernacle.

On the appointed day, Joseph and Mary were in the Temple to present Jesus to God and redeem Him from the service of the altar. Joseph declared formally to the priest that Jesus was his first-born son whom he offered to him as to God's representative. Upon being asked which he preferred, either to give up his first-born or to redeem Him, he answered that he wished to redeem Him, and handed the money to the priest with a prayer. The priest then proclaimed the redemption of the child, and concluded the ceremony with a prayer (GEIKIE, *ibid.*).

(3) **The Meeting of Simeon.** Whilst Joseph and Mary were still before the gate of the Court of the Israelites, a man named **Simeon** entered the Court of the Israelites by the **Nicanor** gate. Traditions represent him as an aged man and this is naturally suggested by his words as recorded in St. Luke, and some attempts have been made to identify him with Rabban Simeon, the son of the great Hillel, and father of Gamaliel, who was afterwards president of the Sanhedrin (Acts v, 34). (Cfr. FOUARD, i, p. 56, sq.)

The Gospel narrative describes him as a just and devout

man, in close union with God, whose mind was filled with an earnest longing for the Messiah, as the "*Consolation of Israel*." He had been favored with a Divine assurance that he should not die until his desire had been fulfilled. Under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, he came into the Temple and recognized in the Holy Child the object of his ardent desires. Taking Him into his arms, he blesses God, and bursts forth into the Canticle known in the evening office of the Church, as the "*Nunc Dimittis*." Simeon desires no longer to live, for he has seen the Savior promised by Jehovah to all nations, to the Gentiles as a light, and to the Jews as their glory.

Joseph and Mary were wondering at these words, but Simeon blessed them in his transports of joy and love. Then with a prophetic insight, he spoke of the future, both of the Child and of his mother.

(4) **The Meeting of Anna, the Prophetess.** At that instant, we are told, an aged woman of the tribe of Aser coming in, approached the gate. She had been deprived of her husband after seven years of marriage, and had persevered in her widowhood; she was actually eighty-four years of age. Her long life had been spent in pious acts and services, either actually dwelling in the Temple, or scarcely leaving it for necessary purposes. She also gave praise to Jehovah, and spoke of the Child to all that look for the redemption of Israel.

St. Luke concludes this section of his Gospel by a historical statement to the effect, that when Joseph and Mary "had performed all things according to the word of the Law of Jehovah, they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth" (St. Luke ii, 39). This statement seems to conflict with what is stated in the narrative of St. Matthew (chap. ii) which places the flight into Egypt from Bethlehem and before the departure for Galilee. Two principal solutions of the difficulty have been proposed. According to the first, Joseph

and Mary went at once to Nazareth to settle their affairs and came back to Bethlehem, their return being followed by the adoration of the Magi and the flight into Egypt ; according to the second, they went to Galilee only after their return from Egypt, and the remark of St. Luke is only an anticipation of future events, as is customary with him (cfr. Luke iv, 14). Perhaps the first solution is preferable. (Cfr. ANDREWS, p. 89, sq.)



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE EPIPHANY.

1. **The Adoration of the Magi** (Matt. ii, 1-12). The Holy Babe was sought and recognized not only by Jews (the shepherds, Simeon and Anna), but also by representatives from the Gentile world. These were the Magi who were seen in Jerusalem, inquiring for the birthplace of the King of the Jews. The particular time at which this took place has ever been a matter of discussion, although an early tradition places the visit of the Magi on the thirteenth day after our Lord's birth (January 6th), and this date seems to be in harmony with St. Matthew (ii, 1) who apparently connects the adoration of the Magi directly with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

It seems, however, impossible to place this event *before* the Purification, without going against several particulars of the Gospel narrative, viz. : against St. Matthew ii, 22, 23, supposing that the flight into Egypt and the return occurred so as to allow the Purification to take place on the fortieth day after our Lord's birth ; against St. Matthew ii, 13 — as indeed against the well-known character of Herod — supposing that Herod waited patiently the return of the Magi, thinking that they had not found the child, till the fortieth day, whereon his attention and wicked designs were awakened afresh by the noise made on the occasion of our Lord's Presentation.

It is therefore more probable that the coming of the Magi took place *after* the Purification : but how long after ? Not

two years as was admitted by Origen and others (for such a long period of time is not necessary, and badly harmonizes with Matt. ii, 1), but rather a few days, or at most, a few weeks.

The Gospel tells us that the Magi came "FROM THE EAST," a general expression which includes all the nations east of Jerusalem, even Arabia and Persia. Three countries in particular have been admitted by commentators: (1) **Arabia**, because the gifts offered by the Magi are native to this country, which is quite near to Judæa, and also because of the prediction of Psalms lxxi, 10, 15, but the gifts offered were common throughout the East, and Arabia is perhaps too far south; (2) **Chaldæa**, because more east than Arabia, and a great seat of astrology; (3) and with greater probability, **Persia**, because of the historical association of the word "Magi" with a priestly Persian caste, and also because early pictures in the catacombs represent the Magi wearing the Persian dress.

The name of Magi originally belonged to a high sacerdotal caste among the Persians and Medes. They formed the King's privy council and cultivated astrology, medicine and occult natural sciences. During the time of the Chaldæan dynasty, there also existed an order of Magi at the court of Babylon (Jer. xxxix, 3), of whom Daniel was made the president (Daniel ii, 48). Subsequently the name was applied to Eastern astrologers, interpreters of dreams, and even to those sorcerers who made pretension to supernatural knowledge (Acts xiii, 8). The whole story of the visit of the Magi leads us to admit, that the Wise Men who came to worship our Lord were not of this last description. That they were astrologers or students of the heavens, may be inferred from Matthew ii, 2, "*we have seen his star in the East.*" If they came from Persia, their name of Magi — which in Persian means *priest* — would naturally suggest that they belonged to the priestly caste of that country. They are often

spoken of as *Kings*: it is more probable, however, that this quality was ascribed to them only in the sixth century of our era, on account of Psalms lxxi, 10, 15.

Early pictures in the catacombs represent only *three* Magi worshipping the infant Jesus, and the names of *Melchior*, *Balthasar* and *Caspar* were not given them before the ninth century after Christ.

There is a general belief as to their saintly death; and we are told that their bones were gathered by St. Helena in the fourth century and carried into St. Sophia in Constantinople, and that ultimately their relics were removed to Cologne, where they are now venerated.<sup>1</sup>

Many conjectures have been made about the STAR which guided the Magi from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Some take it to have been an extraordinary meteor or comet, or a passing star such as has been seen in later times to blaze suddenly forth and rapidly disappear. The great astronomer Kepler calculated that some time before our Lord's birth (747 U. C.), there was a remarkable conjunction of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* in the sign of *Pisces*, to which in the spring following *Mars* was added: this conjunction many take as the star of the Magi. Others finally — and with greater probability — consider this star as a purely miraculous sign having the very peculiar motion indicated in St. Matthew ii, 9, shedding down its rays in some remarkable way so as to indicate a peculiar spot, and bearing in the Gospel narrative the generic name of "*Star*."<sup>2</sup>

But whatever the star was, the Wise Men took it as a sign of the birth of the great King of Judæa, the land ruled by that section of the heavens in which it was seen. They may have been helped to this conclusion by the prophecy of Balaam (Numb. xxiv), by the prophecies of Daniel and by

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, vol. i, pp. 60-68. Andrews, p. 93, sq. Smith, Bibl. Dict. art. Magi. Gosselin, Instructions sur les Principales Fêtes, i, p. 449, sq.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, pp. 6-10. Fouard, i, p. 382.

the general expectation which at the time seems to have pervaded the East that a king should arise in Judæa to rule the world; moreover, great multitudes of the Jews were spread through the East, and their Messianic hopes were most likely known to the Magi. However all this may be, if the star moved them to undertake a journey to the far distant land of the Jews, it was because a Divine impulse determined them to go and worship Him who was so announced.

After a journey of about four months, if they started from Persia, and of about seventy days, if they came from Chaldaea, the Magi arrived at the Jewish capital expecting to obtain there full information about the particular place where the new King of the Jews was born. Their question much more than their dress excited the curiosity of the Holy City. From Jerusalem, they were directed to Bethlehem as the place where, according to prophecy, the Messiah was to be born. As they went, the star reappeared, and guided them to "the house" where Jesus was. Entering the house, they fell down before the Babe and presented their gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh; after which, in compliance with a Divine warning, they left for their own country without coming again by Jerusalem.

2. **The Massacre of the Holy Innocents** (Matt. ii, 3-8; 13-18). Scarcely was Herod informed of the question of the Magi: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" when he trembled for his crown, and formed a crafty plan to get rid of the King of David's descent whom all expected at that time as the Messiah. He therefore consulted the chief priest and scribes as to the *place* where this great king should be born, and the Magi regarding the *time* when the star had appeared. Then he sent the latter away, bidding them return and report the finding of the Babe to him, on the pretext that he too wished to go and worship Him.

A Divine and timely warning caused the Magi to return to their own country without coming back to Jerusalem; and of their departure from Bethlehem Herod was soon made aware, for this village is but a few miles distant from the Holy City. In a frenzy of passion Herod gave orders for the massacre of all the male children in Bethlehem and its neighborhood "from two years old and under." This fact is not recorded by Josephus, it is true; but it may have escaped the notice of the Jewish historian, or it may have been passed by him in silence for some unknown reason. The massacre likewise is not mentioned by heathen writers; but they knew little about Jewish internal history. At any rate, the order to slaughter the Holy Innocents is in full accordance with the historical character of Herod as we described it in Chapter IV (pages 16-21).

Herod's edict was inclusive as regards *locality*, "BETHLEHEM AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD," and also as regards *time*, "FROM TWO YEARS OLD AND UNDER." This latter expression indicates that two years was the extreme limit beyond which the tyrant did not think it necessary to go; and in all probability, Jesus was rather younger, as seems suggested by the word "UNDER." The expression seems also to indicate that Herod did not know what exact relation the time of the appearance of the star had to the birth of our Lord.

The number of children murdered cannot have been large; perhaps fifty were slain; according to some writers, the number did not exceed ten or fifteen (ANDREWS, pp. 100-102).

**3. The Flight into Egypt** (Matt. ii, 13-15). Upon the departure of the Magi, St. Joseph warned from heaven, fled into Egypt with the Mother and the Divine Babe, so that the cruelty of Herod missed its mark.

The *route* followed by the Holy Family was, according to tradition, by way of Hebron, Gaza and the desert: and as this is the most direct way, it is very likely the true one. A

few hours were sufficient to place them out of danger ; and after about three days' journey, they reached the Egyptian boundary.

Egypt was, at the time, a convenient place of refuge, because easily reached from Judæa, outside of Herod's power, and full of Jewish residents. The *particular* place where St. Joseph settled in this foreign land is probably **Metaryîeh**, near Heliopolis, and about two hours distant from Cairo. There he waited until he received a new Divine warning, *i. e.*, "until the death of Herod" (Matt. ii, 15). As to the *Return* from Egypt, St. Joseph received only a general direction (Matt. ii, 20) ; so that he could, if he wished, turn his steps to **Galilee**, without going against the angelic message.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE EARLY LIFE OF OUR LORD.

#### 1. Our Lord's Return from Egypt (Matt. ii, 19-23).

The date of our Lord's return from Egypt is intimately connected with the date of Herod's death. For, on the one hand, the Gospel tells us that St. Joseph remained in Egypt till he received word from God (Matt. ii, 13, 19, 20), and on the other hand, there are good grounds to admit that St. Joseph received the Divine message very soon after the death of Herod, and that he then did not delay but rather hastened his return (ANDREWS, p. 99).

Considering how numerous were the Jews in Egypt, how constant their communications with Palestine, how great their hatred of Herod, it is certain that the news of Herod's death must have soon reached St. Joseph in the ordinary way ; but it was first made known to him by the angel of the Lord (Matt. ii, 19), so that a very short interval must be admitted between the death of Herod and the angelic message. That St. Joseph hastened his return upon this Divine warning is implied in the fact that he did not know that Archelaus was Herod's successor till he reached the Holy Land (Matt. ii, 22).

Now, it is very probable that Herod died in April, 750 U. C.,<sup>1</sup> so that our Lord's return is most likely to be placed in this same year, after about two months of sojourn in Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, p. 1.



The intention of Joseph was to settle down in Bethlehem as the proper place in which to rear the Son of David, near Jerusalem, from which the Messias was expected to extend His rule over the world. He therefore started by the great caravan road which connects Egypt with Damascus.<sup>1</sup> This road passes by Gaza and Ramleh; and it is probably in this last named town—which is connected by a branch road with Jerusalem—that Joseph, complying with a new Divine warning, gave up his purpose to reside in Bethlehem, and withdrew into Galilee. To reach this province, now under the rule of Herod Antipas, he had only to pursue his way on the caravan road, first northward through the plain of Saron, and next eastward, across the mountains into the plain of Esdrælon. A little north of the plain of Esdrælon lies the upland town of Nazareth, in which Joseph took up his abode again, and in which “THE CHILD GREW AND WAXED STRONG” (Luke ii, 40).

2. **Developments of Our Lord’s Human Life.** The words of St. Luke, just quoted, point to what all grant to have been the real condition of our Lord’s *physical* life, viz., a condition of natural development. After its miraculous conception in the virginal womb of Mary (Matt. i, 20; Luke i, 42) our Lord’s body was subject to the ordinary laws of growth: from helpless infancy (Luke ii, 7, 12) it passed through the stage of childhood (Luke ii, 40) and the natural increase in strength and age (Luke ii, 40, 52), into the full vigor of man’s estate (Luke iii, 23; John viii, 57). The physical developments of Christ’s human life were then both real and normal.

As to the developments of His *mental* life, they are the object of considerable difficulty. When St. Luke writes (ii, 52) “AND JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND AGE,” it is plain

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, iii, p. 181.



that the Evangelist refers to such an intellectual growth of our Lord as *appeared* to His contemporaries, no less real than His actual increase in years and bodily strength. The difficulty is to know whether such growth was *real* after the manner in which the mind of a child gradually expands into all manner of knowledge.

Here, recent Protestant writers depart considerably from the teachings of past ages. They admit that the growth undergone by our Lord's mind was a strictly human growth, with all its weaknesses and imperfections and its gradual acquisition of positive knowledge. According to them, Jesus did not know from the beginning that He was the true Son of God; and it was only after long years of prayer and reflection that He became absolutely sure of His Messianic calling. Such a conception of our Lord's mental life is hardly reconcilable with His Divine character, and contradicts not only the constant teachings of Ecclesiastical tradition, but also the impression which the Gospel narrative produces upon the mind of an impartial reader, concerning our Lord's knowledge during His mortal life (cfr. Luke ii, 40; John i, 14, 24, 25).

The common teachings of Catholic theologians is entirely different. They admit that our Lord's mind was endowed with a twofold knowledge which was not susceptible of increase, viz.: the *Beatific Vision* and an *infused* knowledge, in virtue of which He was *ever* "full of wisdom and of truth" (John i, 14; Luke ii, 40). But besides, they hold that His mind acquired an *experimental* knowledge, the actual development of which depended upon the natural and gradual exercise of His mental powers acting on the data of His senses, and in virtue of which He was truly *advancing in wisdom as He increased in age* (Luke ii, 52). Such a coexistence of growth in knowledge with a possession of all its ultimate results, is not without parallel in ordinary human life; the telescope or the theodolite, for instance, may verify a result

of which we have been previously informed by a mathematical calculation; and we are all constantly learning by direct observation, things already known to us.<sup>1</sup>

3. **Our Lord's Apparition among the Doctors** (Luke ii, 41-50). At the age of twelve, a Jewish boy began to be instructed in the Law and to be subject to its regulations. Among these stood prominent the obligation to appear before the Lord three times a year, and as Joseph and Mary had no longer to fear the cruelty of Archelaus, who had been banished the year before by Augustus, they took up with them to the Holy City, and for the first time, the Child Jesus.

This was on the occasion of the Paschal feast of the year 761 U. C. This, the greatest of all the Jewish solemnities, lasted seven days and was attended by countless Jews come to Jerusalem from every part of the world, so that when the seven days were over and the numerous and rejoicing caravans of kinsmen and fellow-countrymen were formed, relations could easily be separated without feeling any anxiety. Thus it was that Joseph and Mary did not feel any anxiety when they first noticed the absence of Jesus; they simply thought that "He was in the company" (Luke 43-44a), and that they would easily find Him at the end of their first day's journey home, most likely at Beeroth, about ten miles north of Jerusalem. Not finding Him however, "AMONG THEIR KINSFOLK AND ACQUAINTANCE," they spent the next day in returning to the Holy City and seeking Him there. But it was only on the following day—the third after the separation—that they found Him within the sacred precincts of the Temple.

The precise part of the Temple where our Lord was sitting with the Jewish doctors cannot be identified with cer-

<sup>1</sup> A Catholic Dictionary, art. **Christ**. **Dehaut**, *Evangile medité*, i, p. 397, etc. Cfr. also, **Liddon**, *The Divinity of Our Lord*, p. 457.

tainty. It was most likely, however, the *Hall of Gazith*, where the Sanhedrim, together with the scribes, ordinarily assembled. During the Paschal festivities in particular, the eminent Jewish doctors of the time sat surrounded by great throngs eager to be instructed by them. Jesus was among their auditors, and He soon astonished all by His questions and answers.

At the sight of Jesus, Mary cannot help addressing to Him a maternal reproach which appeals to His tender love for Joseph and for her. "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." To this tender appeal of His mother, Jesus made an answer full of mysterious meaning: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know, that I must be about the things that are my Father's?" (cfr. FOUARD i, pp. 84, 85).

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE HIDDEN LIFE OF OUR LORD.

ONLY a few words of St. Luke (ii, 51) refer to the *hidden* life of our Lord. We are simply told that leaving the Temple with Joseph and Mary, "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them." As this, however, was the longest period of our Lord's mortal life, we shall briefly study (1) His surroundings, (2) His occupations during His hidden life.

#### § I. OUR LORD'S SURROUNDINGS.

**1. The Place.** The *province*, in which Jesus spent no less than thirty years of His mortal life, is Galilee, the northernmost of the three parts of Palestine, west of the Jordan. It lay wholly inland, and was divided into *Upper* and *Lower* Galilee. *Upper* Galilee comprised the mountain range, a prolongation of Lebanon, which lay between Phenicia and the upper Jordan. As the town of Capernaum was in *Upper* Galilee, this district must have touched to the east, the Lake of Gennezareth, whilst to the west, it reached to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (Mark vii, 31). *Upper* Galilee was more especially the "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt. iv, 15). *Lower* Galilee included the great triangular plain of Esdrælon, with its offshoots which run down to the Jordan and the Lake of Gennezareth, and the whole of the hill country adjoining it on the north, to the foot of the mountain range.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, chap. ix. Ayre, Treasury of Bible Knowledge, art. Galilee. Geikie, Life of Christ, chap. xx. Smith, Bible Dictionary.

Josephus, speaking of the Galilee of his time, says : " Its soil is rich and well cultivated ; fruit and forest trees abound ; numerous large cities and populous villages, amounting in all to no less than 240, thickly stud the whole face of the country." And there is no doubt that *Lower* Galilee, in particular, ever was one of the richest and most beautiful sections of the Holy Land.

The *town* of Nazareth<sup>1</sup>—called our Lord's " own country " in the Gospels (Matt. xiii, 54, etc.)—lies on the western side of a small valley of *Lower* Galilee, a little north of the plain of Esdrælon, about 14 miles from the Sea of Galilee, and 66 miles north of Jerusalem, in a straight line. It is reached from the plain of Esdrælon by rocky and precipitous paths, and its population in our Lord's day is variously estimated from 5,000 to 15,000 inhabitants. Its flat-roofed houses are to-day, in general, built of stone, and have a neat and comfortable appearance, but its streets or lanes are narrow and crooked, and after rain, are so full of mud and mire as to be almost impassable. Nazareth enjoys a mild atmosphere and climate, and all the fruits of the country—as pomegranates, oranges, figs, olives—ripen early and attain a rare perfection.

At the northeast of the town is the *Fountain of the Virgin*, whither Jesus often accompanied Mary when she went to draw water, as the women of Nazareth do in the present day.

The village is surrounded by some fifteen heights, some of which rise to an altitude of 400 or 500 feet. They have rounded tops, and present a pleasing aspect, diversified as they are with the foliage of fig trees, wild shrubs, occasional fields of grain and countless gay flowers. From the top of the hill northwest of Nazareth, there is a most remarkable

<sup>1</sup> Besides the authors already referred to, see : **Andrews**, pp. 104-108 ; **Robinson**, *Biblical Researches*, iii, pp. 183-200 ; **Guérin**, *Terre Sainte*, vol. i.

view often described by travellers, and preferred by Porter, even to that which is enjoyed from the top of Mount Tabor. Finally, a prevalent tradition indicates as the *Mount of the Precipitation*, a hill about two miles southeast of the town.

2. **The People.** A mixed population resided in Galilee long before our Lord's time, and it is probable that during the Babylonian Captivity the strangers so multiplied in the district as to form the largest element of the population. In our Lord's day, the descendants of the **Assyrians** were mingled with the **Jews**—who now formed the principal element—and with **Phenicians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs**. All these foreigners had been brought thither by trade, exercise of power, or the natural intermingling of the neighboring populations, as Galilee was the thoroughfare between Syria and Egypt.

The Galilean Jews were fervent worshippers of Jehovah, and crowded to the Holy City at the feasts, and to the local synagogues on Sabbath days. Far from admitting novelties, they remained extremely faithful to the Law, most likely because of the influence of the Pharisees and Doctors of the Law who seem to have been settled in every town. Contact with strangers did not affect the morals of the Galilean Jews, and their courage could not be questioned; and yet, they were despised by the Jews of the South, who boasted to live near the Temple, amidst a less mixed population, on a holier soil, to possess a greater culture and to speak a purer dialect.

That Nazareth had a worse name than any other Galilean town, is not proved.

3. **The Family and Relatives.** In the home of Nazareth, we find two persons most dear to the Child Jesus, and whom the Gospels call His *parents*: (1) **Mary**, His true mother, of the race of David, married young to Joseph, and

who survived both Joseph and Jesus; (2) **Joseph**, a descendant of David, working at his trade for his daily bread, the foster-father of Jesus, and who died before Him — a tradition says when Jesus was eighteen years old.

Besides His parents, our Lord had *relatives*, who lived also in Nazareth, and perhaps under the same roof with Him. They are indeed called in the Gospels "HIS BROTHERS" and "HIS SISTERS" (cfr. Matt. xii, 46-50; xiii, 55, 56; Mark iii, 31; vi, 3; Luke viii, 19, 20; John ii, 12; vii, 3, 5; cfr. also Acts i, 14; I Cor. ix, 5), never His cousins or kinsmen: but, all grant that this does not necessarily define the degree of relationship which they bore Him; and in fact, three opinions are still held respecting this difficult question.<sup>1</sup>

**First Opinion.** According to a first opinion, these relatives were the *full* brothers and sisters of Jesus, or children both of Joseph and Mary, the mother of the Lord. This view would have the advantage that it takes the words "*brothers*" and "*sisters*," in their strictest natural sense, and after having been admitted by ancient heretics (Helvidius, Jovinian), written down by St. Jerome, it has been revived in Germany by Herder, Strauss, etc.; in England by Alford, Edersheim, etc.; and in America by Schaff, etc. But it is irreconcilable with the ancient and constant tradition of the Church, which has made of the perpetual virginity of Mary an article of Catholic belief. It is also repugnant to the common instinct of Christians who have ever felt that the selection of a woman to be the mother of the Lord carries

<sup>1</sup> Catholic writers on this question: **Fillion**, Commentaire sur St. Matthew, p. 283, sq.; **Vigouroux**, Manuel Biblique, iii, N. 181; Livres Saints et Critiques Rationalistes, tome iv; **Reithmayr**, Introd. au Nouveau Testament, ii, p. 346, sq.; **Fouard**, i, p. 383, sq.

Non-Catholic writers: **Lange-Schaff**, Commentary on St. Matthew, p. 255, sq.; **Andrews**, pp. 111-123; **Mill**, Observations, ii, p. 221, sq.; **Ellicott**, On Galatians, ch. i, 419; **Salmon**, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 474, sq.; **Lightfoot**, Dissertations on the Apostolic Age, pp. 1-45.

**Bible Dictionaries**, cfr. **Smith**, art. James, Brother, etc.; **A Catholic Dictionary**, art. Mary, p. 155, sq.



with it, as a necessary implication, that no other could sustain the same relation to her; and that the selection of a virgin still more necessarily implied that she was to continue so. Even from a lower standpoint, this view is hardly compatible with the fact that our dying Savior intrusted His mother to St. John, if she had other children to take care of her. Finally, whilst the words "*brother*," "*sister*," may certainly be understood otherwise than in their strict natural sense, it is significant that nowhere in the Gospels, those relatives of Jesus are called the *children of Mary*, the mother of the Lord.

**Second Opinion.** A second opinion maintains that the brothers and sisters of our Lord were only His half-brothers and half-sisters, or children of Joseph by a former marriage. This view goes back to the earliest ages of Christianity; it has been admitted by many of the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, and is in the present day the current notion of the *Greek Church*. It does not present any unsurmountable difficulty, and has the advantage that it takes the words "*brothers*," "*sisters*," in a natural sense.

**Third Opinion.** A third opinion takes the words "*brothers*," "*sisters*," in a broad sense, as equivalent to "*cousins*." This view was strongly advocated, and indeed, to all appearance, started by St. Jerome. Under the influence of this great Doctor, it has become the current opinion of the *Latin Church*. There is no doubt that the words "*brother*," "*sister*," may be understood as equivalent to "*cousins*." Again, if our Lord had no brother in the natural sense of the term, we understand easily why He gave John to Mary as her son. It has also been noticed that Jesus is designated at Nazareth, by an appellation usual to the *only son* of a *widow* (Mark vi, 3). For these, and other such arguments, this third opinion remains very probable; although its partisans seem, at times, to rely too much on conjectures to strengthen their position.



## § 2. OUR LORD'S OCCUPATIONS.

Our Lord's life in Nazareth was indeed a hidden life. Subject to His parents (Luke ii, 51) as all good children are, He was simply known as the "carpenter's son" (Matt. xiii, 55), and as "the carpenter" (Mark vi, 3). This last expression implies that He had learned, and that He actually toiled at, the humble trade of His foster-father. We can gather also that He received none of the curious learning of the time, and was subjected to no special training under any great Rabbi, such as St. Paul had under Gamaliel: for St. John (vii, 15) tells us that "the Jews wondered, saying: "How doth this man know letters, having never learned?"

This is all we know for certain about this long period of eighteen years, during which Jesus prepared in silent subjection and obscurity, for the work of His public life. All the rest, as for instance, His going up to Jerusalem for festivals, His mingling with others, His training in the school of Nazareth, etc., remains a matter of more or less probable conjecture. Since, however, His Divine character remained absolutely concealed, we should naturally picture Him to ourselves as conforming to the ordinary ways of the children of His time and condition.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE JEWS DURING THE LIFETIME OF OUR LORD.

1. **The Sons of Herod the Great.** The last will of Herod the Great, having, after a time, been confirmed by Augustus, Palestine was divided between three of his sons :

(1) **Herod Philip II**, a son of Herod and Cleopatra of Jerusalem, became *tetrarch* of Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, Batanea and the district of Panæas (Luke iii, 1). He was a just and moderate ruler, entirely devoted to the duties of his office. He rebuilt Panæas, near the sources of the Jordan, and called it **Cæsarea** in honor of the emperor. As he left no children, at his death his dominions were annexed to the Roman province of Syria. He ruled thirty-seven years, from B. C. 4 to A. D. 34.

(2) **Herod Antipas**, a son of Herod the Great and Malthace, a Samaritan, was appointed *tetrarch* of Galilee and Peræa (Luke iii, 1). By character, he was unscrupulous, tyrannical (Luke iii, 19-21) and weak (Matt. xiv, 9), cruel and cunning (Luke xiii, 32), though not remorseless (Mark vi, 14). He was a truly Eastern despot, capricious and sensual. In defiance of the Jewish Law, he had married the wife of Herod Philip — his brother, who was then living as a private citizen in Rome — and this led him to the murder of John the Baptist. It was before this prince that our Lord appeared at the time of His Passion.

His greatest architectural work was the erection of a city which he called **Tiberias**, in honor of the emperor. After

his banishment to Lyons, in Gaul, his territories were given to Herod Agrippa I, his nephew. He was tetrarch forty-one years: from B. C. 4 to A. D. 38.

(3) **Archelaus**, like Herod Antipas, was a son of Herod and Malthace. He did not enter upon his possessions without opposition and bloodshed, but Augustus confirmed the will of Herod in its essential provisions. Archelaus received the title of *Ethnarch*, with the promise of that of *King*, if he should rule to the satisfaction of Augustus. His territories included Idumæa, Judæa and Samaria. By his tyranny and cruelty, he roused his subjects to appeal to Rome for redress. He appeared before the emperor; and after his cause was heard, he was banished to Vienna, in Gaul. After a rule of ten years (B. C. 4 to A. D. 6), his territories were annexed to the Roman province of Syria; and thus, **Judæa** was placed under the *immediate* Roman domination.<sup>1</sup>

2. **The Immediate Roman Domination over Judæa.**<sup>2</sup> The Jews had asked for this *direct* government of Rome at the death of Herod the Great, in the hope that the Romans would allow them to manage their national affairs after their own customs, under their high priests. This hope was revived by the banishment of Archelaus, but it did not last long. Judæa and Samaria were united to Syria, of which Publius Cyrinus was made president or proprætor, whilst the immediate direction of affairs was given to a *Procurator*, residing at Cæsarea. The powers of this inferior officer cannot be exactly defined. In general, he was subject to the president of the province; yet, in districts lying far from the main province, he seems to have had a large discretionary power, a considerable number of troops at

<sup>1</sup> Besides the Bible Dictionaries, see Emil Schürer, Division i, vol. ii, p. 10, sq.; Seidel, pp. 79-86.

<sup>2</sup> Emil Schürer, Division i, vol. ii, p. 166, sq. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, book xx.

his disposal, and, in certain cases, the power of life and death.

The immediate Roman domination was exercised over the various provinces of the Empire in an irritating, vexatious and oppressive manner, but it was particularly so in Judæa, on account of the peculiar character of the Jews, which contrasted so much with that of the Romans.<sup>1</sup>

It must be said, however, that under Augustus, the rule of Rome over the Jews was fairly tolerable; but the exercise of the Roman power required chiefly two taxes: a *poll* and a *land* tax, the latter tax amounting to one-tenth of all grain and two-tenths of fruit and wine. To establish these taxes a *second census* was necessary. The fiercer spirits rebelled in Judæa, at the idea that the *fruits* of a land consecrated to Jehovah should be given to pagan strangers, and that *tithes* to be paid to God alone should henceforth be paid to a heathen lord. Judas, the Galilean, led the insurrection against the census: he perished, and his followers dispersed.

Towards the close of the reign of Augustus, the procurators of Judæa succeeded rapidly one another; but his successor, **Tiberius**, pursued a different policy. During his long reign, Judæa had only two procurators: Valerius Gratus (A. D. 15-26) and Pontius Pilate (A. D. 26-36).

Under Gratus, things went from bad to worse. He changed the high priests five times in eleven years, and the load of public taxes became so unendurable, that the Jews appealed to Rome for relief; but in all probability, their entreaties did not bring them any alleviation of misery. The successor of Gratus was Pontius Pilate, the very type of the rich and corrupt Roman of his age. He was a worldly-minded statesman, conscious of no higher wants than those of the present life; yet, by no means unmoved by feelings of

<sup>1</sup> Geikie, *Life of Christ*, chap. xviii. Milman, *History of the Jews*, book xii.

justice and mercy. But all his better feelings were overpowered by a selfish regard for his own security.

As specimens of his administration, we may notice the four following facts :

(1) He transferred the winter quarters of the army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem ; hence the soldiers introduced into the Holy City the Roman standards, on which were the image of the emperor and the imperial eagle. No previous governor had ventured on such an outrage and Pontius Pilate had sent his men in by night. The Jews poured down in crowds to Cæsarea, to obtain from him the removal of the odious symbols. Pilate yielded after five days of resistance, and the standards were withdrawn.

(2) On another occasion, he hung up in his palace, at Jerusalem, some gilt shields which were simply inscribed with the names of the donor and of the deity to which they were consecrated. This the Jews so resented that they appealed to Tiberius ; and they obtained the removal of the shields objected to.

(3) On the appropriation by Pilate of the revenue arising from the redemption of vows, to the construction of an aqueduct, a riot ensued. It was suppressed by means of soldiers sent among the crowds, armed with concealed daggers and who slew not only rioters, but also casual spectators. The aqueduct was completed without further hindrance.

(4) Later on, he slaughtered certain Galileans, at some great festival at Jerusalem. This apparently took place in the outer court of the Temple, since the blood of the worshippers was mingled with their sacrifices (Luke xiii, 1).

The conduct of Pilate was equally tyrannical towards the Samaritans ; and on their complaint to Vitellius, then president of Syria, he was ordered to go to Rome, whence it seems Caligula banished him to Vienna in Gaul.

3. **The Internal Divisions.**<sup>1</sup> The **Pharisees** formed the most prominent party among the Jews during the lifetime of our Lord. As their name indicates, they originally arose as champions of the *separateness* of the Jewish people from other nations. They consequently held fast by the distinctive beliefs of the Jewish race, as, for instance, the hope of a great national deliverer in the person of a Messiah, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, of a Divine Providence, of an *oral* tradition equal in authority with the *written* Law. Nor were they less zealous in carrying out the external observances of their ancestors, such as fasts, prayers, tithes, washings, sacrifices, etc. They were ardent patriots, ever willing to lay down their lives for the national independence, and hating the foreign yoke with a bitterness mingled with scorn. The multitudes, although not actually enrolled among the Pharisees, were under their sway, and zealously adhered to a party so intensely national in politics and orthodox in religion. To the Pharisaic party belonged also most of the scribes. Finally, although there were found noble characters among the leaders of the party, self-conceit, arrogance and hypocrisy had become the general characteristics of the sect.

The origin of the **Sadducees** is probably to be traced to a natural tendency opposed to that which gave birth to the Pharisaic party, viz., the desire to tide closely with the ruling power. Their opposition to the Pharisees extended both to religious tenets and to social customs. They notably denied the immortality of the soul, the existence of a Divinely revealed oral tradition, etc. They ridiculed Pharisaic exclusiveness, affected Greek culture, enjoyed foreign amusements and thought it useless to fight for the freedom of their country. They belonged chiefly to the upper and wealthy classes and formed a kind of priestly aristocratic party in close

<sup>1</sup> About the Jewish sects, see : **Seidel**, pp. 128-147; **Emil Schürer**, Division ii, vol. ii, pp. 4-46; and articles in Dictionaries and Encyclopædias.

alliance with the ruling power ; an extreme section of them were the **Herodians**.

The origin of the **Essenes** is very obscure. In the time of Josephus, the Essenes lived in small colonies or villages at long distances from the towns, principally in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea. The differences between them and the Pharisees lay mainly in rigor of practice and not in articles of belief. Those who wished to join them had to pass through two periods of probation. They employed themselves chiefly in agriculture and were devoted to silence and contemplation. Some of them lived in ordinary society, as, for instance, Menahem, a friend of Herod ; but they generally formed an exclusive and isolated community. Their organization resembled closely that of our monastic orders.

For centuries the **Samaritans** had been despised by the Jews, as a mixed race descending from the Assyrian colonists who had settled in the land of Israel, when the northern kingdom was destroyed in the eighth century before Christ. At the time of our Lord, the hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans had reached its climax (John iv, 9) ; and this is explained by several contemporary events : notably, by the connivance of the Samaritans with Herod the Great before his accession to the Jewish throne, by the favor which that prince ever showed to them, by their wilful submission to the *census* and their ready adoption of Roman usages, and finally, by their daring violation of the Temple of Jerusalem during a Paschal festival.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE JEWS DURING THE LIFETIME OF OUR LORD.

1. **The Temple of Jerusalem.** The great centre of the religious life of the Jews during the lifetime of our Lord, was the *Temple* of Jerusalem. Herod had rebuilt it on its original site, Mount Moriah, east of the Holy City. He had, however, considerably enlarged its enclosure to the south; and it is very probable that the present enclosure of the so-called **Mosque of Omar** represents that of the Temple as enlarged by Herod the Great.<sup>1</sup>

When we think of the Jewish Temple, our impulse is to picture to ourselves some building like a classical temple, or a great cathedral. But the first effort of our imagination should be to picture to ourselves a system of structures, one quadrangle within another, the second standing upon higher ground than the outermost, and the *Temple proper* upon a position highest of all. We should imagine the appearance of a wide open space spoken of by the prophets as "THE COURT OF JEHOVAH'S HOUSE," whilst "THE HOUSE" itself, or Temple proper, was erected on the highest of a series of successive terraces, which rose in an isolated mass from the centre of the Court, or rather nearer to its northwestern corner.<sup>2</sup>

The *Outer Court*—the first to be entered when approaching the Sacred Mount—was called "the Court of the Gen-

<sup>1</sup> See Ernest **Babelon**, *Manual of Oriental Antiquities*, pp. 210-212; and Archibald **Henderson**, *Palestine*, p. 141, sq.

<sup>2</sup> **Conybeare** and **Howson**, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. xxi.



tiles," not because it was set apart for them, but because Gentiles rigorously excluded from every other portion of the Temple enclosures, were permitted, with all others, to enter there. In form, it was a quadrangle surrounded by a strong and lofty wall, with but one gate to the east, one to the north, four to the west, and two to the south.<sup>1</sup> On the *inner sides* of this wall extended porticos or cloisters of white marble Corinthian columns: the ceiling was flat and finished with cedar. On three sides there were two rows of columns, but on the southern side, the cloister (*the Royal Porch*) deepened into a fourfold colonnade, and its axis was in a straight line with the axis of the colossal bridge which spanned the Tyropœon valley. These porticos or porches around the Court of the Gentiles were most convenient places for friendly or religious intercourse, for meetings or discussions (cfr. John x, 23, sq.; Acts iii, 11). The open court was paved with stones of various colors; and in it the buyers and sellers congregated (Matt. xxi, 12, 13; John ii, 13-17).

From near the middle of the Court of the Gentiles arose the series of enclosed terraces, on the summit of which was the Lord's House. This more sacred ground was fenced off by low rails of stone, along which, at regular intervals, stood pillars with inscriptions in Greek and Latin, warning Gentiles not to proceed farther, on pain of death. Besides this barrier, a separation was formed by a flight of fourteen steps leading up to a platform or narrow terrace, beyond which arose the wall of the *Inner Court* with its four gates to the north and to the south, and one to the east.<sup>2</sup>

The eastern portion of this second quadrangle or *Inner Court*, was called the *Court of the Women*, not because it was set apart exclusively for their use, but because they were not allowed to advance beyond it. This court covered a space

<sup>1</sup> About the **Gates**, see **Babelon**, *Manual of Oriental Antiquities*, pp. 215-217.

<sup>2</sup> See **Conybeare** and **Howson**, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. xxi.

of more than 200 feet square, and its eastern gate — which formed the principal entrance into the Temple — was the *Beautiful Gate* (Acts iii, 2). All round the court ran a simple colonnade, and within it was the Treasury (Luke xxi, 1, 2); finally, in each of its four corners were chambers, one of which was for the performance of the vows of the Nazarites.<sup>1</sup>

From the western side of the Court of the Women, fifteen semicircular steps led through the *Gate of Nicanor* into the narrow *Court of Israel*, reserved for the men who had accomplished certain acts of purification. Two steps led up from the Court of Israel to the *Court of the Priests*, with which it practically formed but *one* court, divided into two by a low balustrade one and one-half feet high. A colonnade ran around three sides of the Court of the Priests; and among its many chambers, we may notice the hall *Gazith*, the meeting place of the Sanhedrim. The Court of the Priests surrounded the Temple proper, and contained the great *Altar of Burnt-offerings*, together with the apparatus required for its service.<sup>2</sup>

The House, or Temple proper, remains to be described. Its form was that of an inverted T ( $\perp$ ), and it was divided into three parts: the *Vestibule*, the *Holy Place*, and the *Holy of Holies*.

The Vestibule was reached by a flight of twelve steps, and was wider than the rest of the House by thirty feet on each side. Its entrance was covered by a splendid veil, and within it a number of dedicated gifts were kept. Folding doors, plated with gold and covered by a rich veil, formed the entrance to the Holy Place, and above it hung a gigantic vine of pure gold, a beautiful symbol of Israel. In the Holy Place were, to the south, the golden candlestick, to the north, the table of “the loaves of proposition,” and beyond

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Edersheim, *The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>2</sup> Edersheim, *ibid.*, p. 29, sq.

them the altar of incense, near to the entrance to the Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place. The latter was now entirely empty, a large stone, on which the high priest sprinkled the blood on the Day of Atonement, occupying the place where the Ark had stood. A wooden partition separated the Most Holy from the Holy Place, and over the door hung the "SECOND VEIL" (Heb. ix, 3; Matt. xxvii, 51). The Holy Place was but sixty feet long from east to west, and thirty feet wide; and the Most Holy Place was thirty feet long, and as many wide. On three sides of the Temple proper there were side buildings three stories high, and so arranged that the Temple proper rose above them like a clear-story rising above aisles, and bearing aloft a gabled cedar roof, with golden spikes on it, and surrounded by an elegant balustrade (EDERSHEIM, *The Temple*, pp. 34-37).

At the northwestern corner of the Temple enclosure stood the fortress **Antonia**, ever reminding the Jewish worshippers of the hated Roman yoke.

2. **The Priesthood.** The persons who had charge of the Temple, and a large number of whom were always in residence, were the priests, whose duty it was to mediate between Jehovah and His people. They formed a sacred order, to which no one could be admitted who did not belong to it by birth; for according to the legislation of the Pentateuch, "THE SONS OF AARON" were alone entitled to the rights and privileges of the Jewish priesthood. Physical defects however—amounting to 142 at the time of our Lord—disqualified a descendant of Aaron, not indeed for the priestly *order*, but for the *exercise* of its functions. So that, before being selected for the discharge of the sacred duties of the priesthood, a man had to prove (1) that he was a legitimate descendant of Aaron, and (2) that he was exempt from all disqualifying bodily blemishes.

If a young man had duly established this to the satisfaction of the Sanhedrim, he was set apart for the priestly ministry by a special consecration, which originally lasted seven days, and consisted in sacrifices, purifications, the putting on of the holy garments, the sprinkling of blood, and anointing with oil. It is probable, however, that the anointing with oil was no longer in use in our Lord's time.

For the service of the Temple, the numerous descendants of Aaron had been divided by David into twenty-four courses, which would officiate in regular succession, changing every Sabbath, so that each course would be in attendance at the sanctuary at least twice a year. It is true that only four of these courses came back from the Exile, but they were divided afresh into twenty-four courses, each of which formed a distinct body, with presidents and elders at its head. After the return, the number of priests rapidly increased in the Holy Land: and yet, however numerous, they must have been comfortably provided for. They had a considerable share in the victims which the Jews of all nations offered in sacrifice in the Holy City; and even independently of these sacrifices, dues of various kinds were paid to them, such as first fruits, tithes of the products of the ground, the redemption money for the first-born of man and beast, etc.

Although in some cases, the priests exercised judicial functions, and were in charge to preserve and expound the Law, their duties were mainly sacrificial. They had to prepare and offer the daily, weekly and monthly sacrifices, and such as were brought by individuals at the great festivals or on special occasions, and in general they conducted the public service of the sanctuary.

At the head of the whole Jewish priesthood was the *high priest*. He was to be a person especially sacred, hence any bodily imperfection or blemish excluded him from the office. There were, besides, other disqualifications, such as illegitimacy, idolatry, etc. Under the Romans, this office was too

often entrusted to persons who had neither age, nor learning, nor rank to recommend them.

The services of the consecration, which originally lasted seven days, consisted in sacrifices, anointing with oil, and putting on of the sacred garments. But in our Lord's time, the anointing had long ceased to be in use, and a simple investiture was gone through, together with the offering of the sacrifices. We have already noticed that under the Roman domination, the high priests had become mere puppets in the hands of the Roman procurators, and that Gratus and Pontius Pilate were famous for the rapid deposition and substitution of high priests which they effected.

And yet, the position of the high priests combined in one and the same person both a *civil* and a *sacred* dignity. To him alone belonged the right to officiate on the great day of Atonement. He alone could enter the Most Holy Place; he was also the supreme administrator of sacred things and the final arbiter of all religious controversies. At the same time, he presided over the Sanhedrim; and in all political matters he was the supreme representative of the Jews in their relations with the Romans.<sup>1</sup>

**3. The Synagogues.** During the abode in Babylon, the sacrificial services of the Temple were, of course, discontinued; hence, it is most likely to this period that we must ascribe the origin of a religious institution which at the Return of the Jews was transplanted into Palestine, and which in our Lord's time was spread everywhere, viz.: the institution of the synagogues. No sacrifices could be offered in these meeting-places; but public prayers were put up, and Holy Writ was read and practically expounded. The synagogues often consisted of two apartments: one for prayer, preaching and public worship; the other for the meetings of

<sup>1</sup> See especially: **Schürer**, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, second division, vol. i, pp. 195-299; **Edersheim**, *The Temple*, pp. 58-78.

learned men, for discussions concerning questions of religion and discipline, and for purposes of education.

In the audience chamber of a synagogue we might notice the "FIRST CHAIRS" (Matt. xxiii, 6); a *desk* for the reader; a *chest* in which the rolls of the Sacred Book were preserved; and perhaps some lamps for use at the evening worship. Over every synagogue there was a "RULER" (Mark v, 35), whose duty it was to attend to the external affairs of the synagogue, and to maintain order in the meetings. *Elders* (Luke vii, 3; Mark v, 22) were associated with him in the management; whilst the inferior duties connected with the synagogue were discharged by servants or "MINISTERS" (Luke iv, 20).

The rulers of the synagogue had the power to inflict excommunication or exclusion from the synagogue, a most important act of religious discipline, whereby those under excommunication were looked upon as no better than the heathen (John ix, 22; xii, 42; Luke vi, 2; Matt. xviii, 17).<sup>1</sup>

4. **The Scribes.** The chief interpreters of Holy Writ in the synagogues were the *Scribes*, who, far more than the priests, guided and shaped the religious life of the people at large. They belonged to different tribes and families, and also to different sects, although most of them, whilst being Scribes by office, were Pharisees by religious and political profession. In the time of our Lord they were spread everywhere, and because of their special skill in the Law and in the other Sacred Writings, they were reputed as men of great learning. They loved the title of "RABBI" (Matt. xxiii, 6, 7), and required the greatest honors not only from their pupils, but also from the public at large.

By their theoretical and practical interpretation of Holy Writ they had gradually laid a most heavy burden upon the

<sup>1</sup> See **Schürer**, Division ii, vol. ii, pp. 52-83; **Seidel**, pp. 119-123; **Horne**, Introduction to the Holy Scriptures, part iii, chap. i, section 4; **Edersheim**, Sketches of Jewish Life, chap. xvi, xvii.

people, for it was their aim to apply the Law to all imaginable circumstances of daily life, and their work in that direction was characterized by slavery to the letter, and by subtle casuistry. Moreover, through their great attachment for the "TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS," they had gone so far as to "MAKE VOID THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD" (Mark vii, 2-23), and to teach the people to neglect some of the most fundamental principles of the moral law (Matt. xii, 1-6; xv, 1-20; xxiii).

The origin of the Divine authority they ascribed to these traditions, is to be referred to their theory that Moses himself had delivered to Israel, an *oral* Law together with the *written* Law. This oral Law was as old as the Pentateuch, and had come down in an authentic form, through the prophets to Edras, the first and greatest of the Scribes. Hence they inferred that the *whole* Law, written and oral, was of equal practical authority. Through this conception of a traditional law, the Scribes were led into many a departure from the spirit of the written Word (Mark vii, 13), and indeed, were betrayed into looking upon all their traditional customs and interpretations—however recent—as no less authoritative than the revealed precepts of the Law.<sup>1</sup>

**5. The Sanhedrim.** It was in one of the halls of the Temple that, up to about A. D. 30, the *Sanhedrim* or highest council of the Jews, made up of chief priests, elders and scribes, met under the presidency of the high priests. Its origin is unknown; and the view of the Jewish rabbis which identifies the Sanhedrim with the council of seventy elders on whom the Holy Spirit was poured to assist Moses in the administration of justice, is without serious grounds. This supreme tribunal of the Jews counted seventy-one members

<sup>1</sup> See W. Robertson Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, Lect. iii; Emil Schürer, *Division ii*, vol. i, pp. 306-379; Seidel, pp. 98-111; art. *Scribes, Pharisees*, in *Smith's Bible Dictionary*.



of pure Israelite descent and was governed by a president and two vice-presidents ; besides, there were secretaries and other officers.

During our Lord's lifetime, the power of the Sanhedrim extended to matters of the greatest importance. Among others, we may notice that it superintended the ritual of public worship, regulated the Jewish calendar, enforced the exact fulfilment of the Law, punished false prophets and even exercised judicial control over the high priests. However, its privilege of carrying into effect a sentence of death it had pronounced, had been taken from the Sanhedrim and reserved to the Roman procurator. The supreme authority of the decrees of the Sanhedrim was acknowledged by all the Jews dispersed throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See **Schürer**, Division ii, vol. i, pp. 165-195 ; **Seidel**, pp. 91-95 ; art. **Sanhedrim** in **Schaff, Smith**, Bible Dictionaries.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE WORK OF OUR LORD.

1. **The Difficulties of Our Lord's Work.** The social and religious condition of the Jews in our Lord's day — which we have briefly described in the foregoing chapters — naturally created many difficulties against the acceptance of His teachings.

One of these difficulties arose from the national antipathies and susceptibilities of our Lord's contemporaries. The Romans despised, it is true, the Jewish nation and thought they could easily quell any revolt against their domination; yet, they were naturally jealous of their authority, and would certainly resent His open assumption of the title of the Messiah and His preaching of a new kingdom, for both could easily lead the Jewish multitudes to new uprisings against the hated power of Rome. Again, the Samaritans and the Jews were no less at variance between themselves than the Romans and the Jews; hence, any special favor shown by Jesus to the members of either community would certainly tell against the influence of His words and miracles upon the minds and hearts of the other.

A second and greater difficulty to our Lord's work was to be found in the narrowness or the fears of the Jewish leaders. To be welcome as a teacher to the Scribes and the Pharisees of His time, Jesus should have belonged to the learned class of the "MASTERS IN ISRAEL" (John iii, 10), and like them He should have pledged Himself to uphold all the "TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS," but more particularly, He should

have felt bound to comply with the rules of the Scribes and the Pharisees, since "ALL THE JEWS" (Mark vii, 3) — even the Sadducees — carried them out faithfully; and the Gospel records prove that to be faithful to His mission, our Lord had to set all these traditions aside and to unmask fearlessly the pride and hypocrisy of this the most influential of the Jewish sects. The Sadducees were no less opposed to the work of our Lord than the Pharisees. His doctrine was in direct contradiction in several points to that of the Sadducees, and His public mission appeared to them most objectionable. On the one hand, these cautious politicians saw that the multitudes were more and more won to His cause, and feared lest they would ultimately crown Him King and rebel against Rome; and on the other hand, they were fully persuaded that Jesus had not at His disposal the forces necessary to cope successfully with the Roman legions. These various elements of opposition to our Lord's work were all represented in the Sanhedrim, and their ultimate combination against His work and His life led to His trial and to His execution.

It must be said, however, that the greatest difficulty our Divine Lord had to contend with in the discharge of His public mission arose from the mistaken notions concerning the Messiah, which were so prevalent in the minds of His contemporaries. As we have seen in Chapter V, the Jewish expectations respecting the person and work of the Messiah, the nature and conditions of the Messianic kingdom, ran directly counter to what the Redeemer of the World had to be and to establish upon earth.

**2. The Means used by Our Lord in His Public Work.** One of the most remarkable features of the conduct of our Lord during His public ministry is His prudence of action. During His entire public work we find no trace of the least collision with the Roman power. He usually moves

in Galilee, far from immediate contact with the Roman officials, avoids assuming the Messianic title, never shows the least desire of the royal dignity, and when pressed by His enemies to declare whether it is lawful to pay the tribute to Cæsar or not, He answers in a manner which had to be distorted in order that it might be brought against Him at the time of His Passion.

Our Lord did not act with less prudence in His relations with the Jewish authorities. Here, however, the avoidance of a collision was an impossibility. His mission of Savior of souls required that He should unmask His opponents to the people and contend openly with them, and this He did repeatedly with a severity proportionate to the ardor of His zeal. But outside these cases, He acted towards them with the utmost kindness. Indeed, it may be said that His conduct was ever in perfect harmony with this most wise distinction between the authority and the person of the Jewish leaders: "ALL WHATSOEVER THEY SHALL SAY TO YOU, OBSERVE AND DO; BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS, DO YE NOT" (Matt. xxiii, 3).

It is in the same prudent way that Jesus did not go at once against the mistaken Messianic notions of the people or even of His chosen disciples. He knew that inveterate prejudices must not be handled roughly and that a gradual light is not only more welcome, but also more effective. Hence He suggested in various ways, but especially through striking parables, the truths regarding the nature of the Kingdom of God, its growth, conditions of entrance, etc., which He could not have disclosed openly without hurting uselessly the most cherished hopes of His contemporaries. And it is only towards the close of His work that He fully disclosed the truth of His equality with the Father and of His sacrificial relations to the Jews and to the world.

A second means which our Lord employed for the fulfilment of His mission is the wonderful power of His words.

Down to the present day, His discourses are a spirit, an impulse, a direction, not a series of abstract, dry enactments, so that every one of His hearers could at once feel their importance and their beauty. They were also characterized by great originality, for even when He took up the religious truths of the Old Testament revelation, He cleansed them from their grosser interpretations and gave them a spiritual meaning hitherto unsuspected. In opposition to the method of the Scribes, the teachers of the time, "HE SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY," never retailing the opinions of interpreters before Him, never backing a statement by the authority of some master. Seldom He discussed with His hearers, but when controversy was engaged, either with the Pharisees or the Sadducees, He ever and easily remained victorious. So great, indeed, was the power of His words, that the multitudes in their eagerness to hear Him, pressed upon Him in great numbers, followed Him everywhere, forgetful of the very necessities of life.

The miracles which our Divine Lord performed were, however, the most powerful means at His disposal, to attract to Him the admiration, gratitude and authority necessary to cope successfully with the opposition of the Jewish leaders. He multiplied these wonders at each step, and performed miracles such as no man had wrought before Him. All the elements of nature, all the diseases of the body, life and death, and even invisible spirits felt the effects of His Divine power. A simple touch, a single word were quite sufficient to exercise this power over the most inveterate diseases and even His presence was not necessary for the performance of such wonders. The most intimate thoughts of His hearers, as well as the most remote events were equally known to Him. Not only did He perform miracles Himself, but He imparted a similar power to His messengers on different occasions. It was, therefore, plain to His contemporaries, that He was endowed with a perfect mastery over

all creatures. The multitudes instinctively felt that the coming Messiah could not be expected to perform greater miracles and were led to consider Him as being Himself the Messiah who, as they thought, by His miraculous power was to drive the foreigners from the Holy Land, submit the Gentiles to the Jews, and start a new era of material and religious prosperity. Only blind leaders, who wilfully blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, could ascribe such beneficent works to the agency of the Evil One. Finally, our Lord Himself repeatedly appeals to them as clear proofs of His Divine mission and superhuman power.

**3. Length of Our Lord's Public Work.** The ministry of our Lord includes, indeed, the period between His baptism and His ascension ; but how long this period was, is a question which has ever been debated in the Church.

During the first three centuries the prevalent opinion was that the ministry of Christ lasted not more than a year and a few months, and included only two Paschal celebrations, viz., that which followed soon on His baptism, and that which preceded immediately His crucifixion. Some writers, however, during the third and following centuries, regarded our Lord's ministry as including three Paschal festivals. Eusebius, who wrote in the first part of the fourth century, was the first who represented the ministry of Christ as including four Passovers ; his opinion did not prevail at once, for during the latter part of the fourth century, several church writers, among whom was St. Augustine, still retained the ancient opinion, viz., that it included two Passovers only. Subsequently, however, and up to the middle of the eighteenth century, the view of Eusebius was received without misgiving ; and at the present day, it is by far the most prevalent among Biblical scholars ; it maintains that the public ministry of our Lord lasted three years and a few months and that it included four Paschal celebrations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **Carpenter**, *Harmony of the Gospels*, dissertation i, pp. xiii-xx.

If we consult the Gospel records we shall find that none of the Evangelists states explicitly either the exact duration of our Lord's ministry or the number of Passovers included within the period between His baptism and His ascension. Again, we may notice that the *Synoptists* mention only one Pasch, namely, the last one He celebrated in Jerusalem before His death, whilst they incidentally refer to facts which clearly imply another Paschal festival as having occurred during our Lord's public ministry (cfr. Matt. xii, 1; Mark ii, 23; Luke vi, 1). Finally, we find that St. John speaks certainly of three Passovers (ii, 13; vi, 4; xi, 55; xiii, 1), and probably of a fourth one in Chapter v, 1. In the last passage just referred to, the fourth Evangelist tells us that "THERE WAS A FESTIVAL OF THE JEWS AND JESUS WENT UP TO JERUSALEM." Now it can be shown with great probability that this "FESTIVAL OF THE JEWS" was first of all, distinct from either of the Passovers spoken of in Chapter ii, 13, and in Chapter vi, 4, and next, from either the feast of Pentecost or that of Tabernacles.<sup>1</sup>

We therefore conclude, that whilst it is beyond doubt that our Lord's ministry included at least three Paschal celebrations, it is very probable that it included a fourth Passover, and that consequently the entire duration of the public work of Jesus extended to three years and a few months.

<sup>1</sup> Vigouroux et Bacuez, *Manuel Biblique*, vol. iii, n. 142. Smith, *Bible Dictionary*, art. Jesus Christ, p. 1359. Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, pp. 189-198.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE IMMEDIATE PREPARATION OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

1. **The Preaching of St. John.** Our Lord was soon to commence His public life, when John, the son of Zachary, was directed by heaven to begin his mission of precursor. St. Luke tells us that this happened "IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF TIBERIUS CÆSAR" (iii, 1, 2). This "FIFTEENTH YEAR" is most likely to be reckoned from the time when this prince was associated with Augustus in the government of the empire, and consequently, it corresponds to the year 779 U. C. (A. D. 26). That it was a *Sabbatical* year is regarded as probable by some authors, who explain in this manner how the people could flock to John in great numbers and from all parts of the land (Matt. iii, 5).<sup>1</sup>

The holy precursor began his instructions in the wilderness of Judæa (Matt. iii, 1), and then he moved northward, apparently following the course of the Jordan (Luke iii, 3). He announced the near coming of the Messias and of His Kingdom and bade his hearers prepare for this most important event by genuine sorrow for sin and a true change of life. His words went directly against one of the most mischievous errors of his contemporaries, who felt sure of a place in the Kingdom of the Messias, simply because of their descentance from Abraham and of their scrupulous—though soulless—discharge of outward practices of penance and

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, *Life of Christ*, i, p. 96. Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, pp. 23-29, 145-146, Wieseler, *Chronological Synopsis*, p. 184, sq.



religion. His language assumed a particularly severe tone when addressed to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, whom he called "OFFSPRING OF VIPERS" because of their hypocrisy, which turned religion itself into a vice and hid a deadly malice under the appearance of zeal. As a body, these Jewish leaders rejected His exhortations to repentance and moral reform, and were far from desiring the baptism which John administered to the humble and truly repentant multitudes (Matt. iii, 2, 5-12; Mark i, 4-8; Luke iii, 3, 7-9).<sup>1</sup>

The fame of the new prophet spread rapidly, and as St. Matthew informs us "JERUSALEM AND ALL JUDÆA AND ALL THE COUNTRY ABOUT JORDAN WENT OUT TO HIM (iii, 5). Even the roughest elements of society, such as the publicans and the soldiers, felt deeply the influence of his preaching and were willing to follow his counsels (Luke iii, 10-14). Very soon the ministry of the precursor caused so general an excitement and so lively an expectation that "ALL WERE THINKING IN THEIR HEARTS OF JOHN, THAT PERHAPS HE MIGHT BE THE CHRIST (Luke iii, 15).

When we inquire into the causes of an influence so widespread and so considerable, we find that they are chiefly three: (1) the personal appearance of John, which was in striking contrast with that of the teachers of the time and forcibly reminded the multitudes of the old prophet Elias (IV Kings i, 7, 8); (2) the character of his preaching, so earnest in its tone, so striking in its images, so disinterested in its motives, so practical in its bearing, so perfectly in harmony with his own life; (3) the expectation of the Messiah, which was more than ever prevalent among, and dear to, the multitudes, and which the very preaching of John had rendered more lively and more certain.

**2. The Baptism of Our Lord** (Matt. iii, 13-17; Mark i, 9-11; Luke iii, 21-23). From the summary accounts

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, *Life of Christ* i, p. 113, sq.



which the Gospels give us of the preaching of St. John, we easily gather that the burden of his teachings was the necessity, even for the Jews, to prepare for the Messianic Kingdom by a hearty renunciation of sin and a real amendment of life. And it is this necessity which he symbolized by administering to the multitudes a baptism hitherto required only from proselytes to Judaism. He had been sent to baptize with water (John i, 33), and his baptism shared in the preparatory character of his entire mission, inasmuch as it taught the Jews the true frame of mind and feelings of heart with which they should receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which was reserved to Him whom John announced.

St. John had been baptizing for some time when Jesus, leaving Nazareth, "WENT TO THE JORDAN" to be baptized by the holy precursor. The precise place of our Lord's baptism is not indicated in the Gospel narrative and remains doubtful down to the present day, St. John having baptized the multitudes at different points of the river. The most common opinion, however, is that our Lord was baptized on the lower Jordan, near Jericho, at a place named Bethany (cfr. John i, 28 ; x, 40).

Ecclesiastical writers have suggested various motives why Jesus submitted to a rite expressive of inward repentance and intended reform. The motive the most probable, because suggested by our Lord's words to St. John (Matt. iii, 15), is that He wished thereby to comply with a general disposition of Divine Providence that He should not be exempt during His mortal life from the rites enjoined by God upon the Jews of the time.<sup>1</sup>

It has been affirmed that the words of St. John by which he stayed Jesus, saying : " I OUGHT TO BE BAPTIZED BY THEE, AND COMEST THOU TO ME ? " implied a previous and per-

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Knabenbauer, in S. Matthæum, i, pp. 137-138.

sonal acquaintance of the precursor with our Lord. Such an acquaintance with the person and character of Jesus is by no means certain. The homes of John and Jesus were far removed, and the sojourn of the precursor in the wilderness extended to the very moment "of his manifestation in Israel." We must, therefore, consider it much more probable that John had never seen Jesus before (John i, 31, 33), and that he was able to discern His exalted character only through an inward inspiration. Such supernatural discernment of character was sometimes given to the prophets of old, and it should be remembered that this same precursor, when yet in his mother's womb, had leaped for joy at the salutation of the mother of the Lord. Yet it was not till St. John had seen the appointed sign, the descent of the Holy Ghost, that he could bear official witness to the Messianic dignity of Jesus (John i, 31-34). There is no reason to suppose that the apparition of the Holy Spirit in a bodily shape, "AS A DOVE," was seen by the multitude. Jesus saw it (Matt. iii, 16), and John also, whose mission it was to bear witness to others, that Jesus "IS THE SON OF GOD" (John i, 31, 32, 34), and apparently no one else.

St. Luke (iii, 23) informs us that our Lord at His baptism was "ABOUT THE AGE OF THIRTY YEARS," an expression, the natural meaning of which is, that Jesus was some months or parts of a year, more or less than thirty: He was not just thirty, nor twenty nine, nor thirty one years of age. Whence it follows that our Lord, born in December, 749 U. C., was baptized towards the end of 779, or the beginning of 780, U. C. The probabilities are in favor of 780 (A. D. 27).

Now the first Pasch which followed our Lord's baptism fell upon the 11th of April; so that in the interval between this Pasch and His baptism we must place various events — the forty days' temptation, the return of Jesus to Galilee, where He attended the wedding at Cana, and our Lord's few days' sojourn in Capharnaum, immediately before going up to

Jerusalem — which occupied upwards of two months. This naturally leads us to look for the traditional month of January, as the month in which Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, and the climatic peculiarities of Palestine offer no valid objections to this month.<sup>1</sup>

**3. The Temptation** (Matt. iv, 1-11; Mark i, 12, 13; Luke iv, 1-13). Immediately after His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness of Judæa, to be tempted by the Devil. This wild place where the Son of God "WAS WITH BEASTS" (Mark i, 13) has already been described. Tradition points to a high mountain, a little west of Jericho, as the "VERY HIGH MOUNTAIN" from which the Tempter showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the world. This mountain, a limestone peak, exceedingly sharp and abrupt, and overlooking the plain of the Jordan and beyond, has been called the *quarantania*, in allusion to the fast of forty days.

That the true Son of God should have been tempted by the Evil One, will ever remain a most mysterious, though most certain event, in the history of mankind. Nothing, of course, could allure to sin a Divine person, and apparently victory over temptation could secure no merit for a soul which could not sin. Various reasons, however, have been set forth to explain why our Divine Lord was actually tempted.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv, 15), we are told that in Jesus "WE HAVE NOT A HIGH PRIEST, WHO CANNOT HAVE COMPASSION ON OUR INFIRMITIES; BUT ONE TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS LIKE AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN" (cfr. also Heb. ii, 17). Again, it has been said, that the second Adam suffered this humiliation, that all Adam's sons might share in His victory; and there is no doubt, that

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, pp. 21-35.

<sup>2</sup> Fouard, i, p. 121, sq. H. J. Coleridge, *The Works and Words of our Savior*, p. 93. Fillion, *St. Matthieu*, p. 80.

Christians under temptation have ever found in the pattern of their tempted Savior, both an instructive example and a great source of power to overcome their ghostly enemy.

If we had only the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark, we would naturally suppose that our Lord's temptation consisted simply in the three assaults which St. Matthew records in detail, and consequently that it lasted but a short time. But St. Luke's narrative is decisive, to the effect that Jesus was actually tempted during all the forty days He remained in the wilderness, and that it was at the end of this long period that He underwent these three great assaults.

It is not necessary to detail and refute here the various theories invented by Protestants and Rationalists, against what Ecclesiastical tradition has ever believed to have been the true nature of the Tempter, and of his three final assaults against our Lord.<sup>1</sup> An impartial study of the Gospel records proves beyond all doubt that the Evangelists intended to describe a real external occurrence in which a personal Tempter appeared to Jesus in a bodily form, spoke audible words, went visibly from place to place, and finally departed. It is clear, furthermore, that our Lord having no inordinate inclination towards any thing, could not be tempted to deviate from His appointed path of duty by the inward solicitations of appetite, of ambition and of worldliness, but only by the outward suggestions of the Evil One. These suggestions appealed to the threefold great concupiscence of our fallen nature, and Satan hoped that they would prove the more easily successful against Jesus, because he presented them when our Lord's physical frame had been greatly weakened by a rigorous and prolonged fast, and also because in using them, he simply proposed to Jesus to act as the worldly Messiah whom the Jews expected. But Satan's hope was

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, i, p. 121, sq. Godet, On St. Luke, pp. 142-145 (New York: Funk Co. 1881). Godet's own theory, however, is not admissible. Dehaut, *l'Evangile expliqué*, etc., vol. i, p. 485, sq. (Paris, 1873).

doomed to disappointment. For whether approached by the Tempter in the wilderness, or led by him to the top of one of the platforms of the Temple's enclosure, or to the summit of a high mountain, Jesus never swerved in the least from what He knew to be the Divine will in His regard. He met promptly, firmly, all the suggestions of Satan by direct appeals to Holy Writ — which St. Paul in his inspired language will call later "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT" (Ephes. vi, 17), — and finally put this enemy to flight with contempt.

The direct, and as it were personal, conflict between Jesus and Satan was over till the time of our Lord's ignominious Passion and Death (Luke iv, 13; xxii, 53), and heavenly spirits came and ministered to Jesus (Matt. iv, 11).



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# OUTLINES

OF THE

# LIFE OF OUR LORD

BY THE

REV. FRANCIS E. GIGOT, S. S.

## PART II

FROM THE BEGINNING OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY  
UP TO THE ASCENSION

St. John's Boston Ecclesiastical Seminary

BRIGHTON, MASS.

1897

MBS

CENTRAL RESERVE

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE BEGINNING OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

#### § 1. THE FIRST FIVE DISCIPLES OF JESUS (JOHN I, 35-51).

**1. Their Names, Places of Birth and Station in Life.** The opening events of our Lord's public life are recorded only by the beloved disciple who had been a witness of them all. He pictures to us Jesus attaching to Himself His first five disciples: Andrew and another left unnamed in the Gospel narrative, but who was no other than John, the modest writer of the fourth Gospel; Simon and Philip; and finally Nathanael, who is most likely identical with the apostle Bartholomew.<sup>1</sup> They were all Galileans by birth; and Andrew, together with Simon and Philip (John i, 45), and probably John (cfr. John i, 44, and Luke v, 10), were of Bethsaida on the western shore of the lake of Genesareth, whilst Nathanael was of Cana in Galilee (John xxi, 2). Tradition represents the latter as of nobler birth than the other four, who were poor fishermen, although the father of St. John seems to have been a fisherman of some means (Mark i, 20; John xix, 27).

**2. When and How Brought to Jesus?** The exact time at which these five men became the disciples of Jesus, cannot be determined. It was, however, not long after our Lord's return from the scene of the Temptation, and when

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, vol. i, p. 135, footnote 3; Maclear, A Classbook of New Testament History, p. 159, footnote.

His holy precursor was still baptizing at Bethany, and had just given a public testimony to His Messianic character (John i, 19-34). St. John the Baptist was, in fact, the direct means to bring Andrew and John to Jesus, by pointing to Him as "the Lamb of God" (John i, 35-40). Both were soon convinced that they had indeed "found the Messiah" (John i, 41), and they immediately went in quest each of his own brother, to impart to them the good news. Andrew was the first to find Simon, his brother, and he led him to Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The next day occurred the first direct call from Jesus himself. When about to go forth into Galilee, He found Philip, and at once made of him His disciple by these simple words, "Follow me." No sooner had Philip recognized Jesus as the Messiah, than he sought a friend of his to impart to him the same belief. This friend was Nathanael, who was at first reluctant to believe that any thing good could come from Nazareth, but who soon became a fervent disciple of Jesus (John i, 45-50).

**3. Their First Relations with our Lord.** The Gospel narrative does not describe in detail the first relations of these five disciples with their new Master. It briefly tells us of Jesus inviting Andrew and John to His temporary abode and spending long hours with them (John i, 38, 39),<sup>2</sup> changing the name of Simon into that of Peter (John i, 42), bidding Philip simply to follow Him (John i, 43), and finally manifesting to Nathanael a knowledge more than human (John i, 47, 48). But this narrative, however brief, clearly proves two things: (1) that our Lord had from the very beginning of His public life, a most distinct knowledge of His entire mission; (2) that His first five disciples derived from their first relations with Him, a real conviction that He was the long expected Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> **Fillion**, St. Jean, p. 26; **Meyer**, The Gospel of John, p. 88, American edition.

<sup>2</sup> On the Jewish manner of counting the hours of the day, see **Andrews**, p. 158, sq.



4. **The Titles given to Jesus.** This same narrative is also remarkable for the three titles we find therein given to Jesus. The first is that of "*the Lamb of God*" applied to our Lord by St. John the Baptist (John i, 36). Jesus was thereby pointed out as the "Servant of Jehovah" spoken of by Isaias (liii), who would make atonement for the sins of the people by His vicarious sufferings.<sup>1</sup> The second title was that of "*the Son of God, the King of Israel*" (John i, 49), addressed to Jesus by Nathanael. In this twofold designation, we should not see anything else than an emphatic recognition of our Lord's Messianic dignity, which, in the eyes of His new disciple, exalted Him far above all those — whether men or angels — who could be styled "the sons of God," and made Him "the Great King" of the Jews.<sup>2</sup> The last title was that of "*the Son of Man*," which our Lord applied to Himself in his conversation with Nathanael (John i, 51). This was another Messianic designation in the phraseology of the time, and it was preferred by our Lord to any other in connection with His Messianic dignity, chiefly because it less recalled to the minds of His hearers their false notions of material prosperity and glory during the Messianic era.

## § 2. THE FIRST MIRACLE (JOHN II, 1-11).

1. **The Occasion : A Wedding at Cana of Galilee.** The faith of the first five disciples of Jesus, however real, needed to be strengthened by the sight of those miracles which the Messiah was expected to perform in Israel, and this sight was first granted to them on the occasion of a wedding at Cana of Galilee.

Two towns have been pointed out as the place of our Lord's first miracle: (1) **Kana el-Jelîl**, about nine miles north of Nazareth; (2) **Kefr Kenna**, only four and one-

<sup>1</sup> **Fillion**, St. Jean, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> **Fouard**, vol. i, p. 137; **Fillion**, St. Matthieu, p. 322.

half miles northeast of Nazareth. Even granting that the modern name **Kana el Jelîl** is nearer to the ancient name "Cana of Galilee," yet it must be maintained that the traditional **Kefr Kenna** is more probably the place of the wedding, because of its proximity to Nazareth, and because of its situation on the direct road between Nazareth and the lake of Gennesareth.<sup>1</sup>

Upon his return from the Jordan, Jesus had not gone directly to Cana, but to Nazareth, where, however, He and His disciples did not find Mary, for "on the third day" — apparently the third day after our Lord's departure for Galilee — "there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there" (John ii, 1). Thither He directed His steps, either previously invited or called, with His disciples as soon as His coming was known.

2. **The Request of Mary.** Wedding festivities usually continued for a week, and a bridegroom in humble circumstances — such as the one spoken of in the Gospel narrative, — could ill afford to make provision for an entertainment of so long duration. It has also been supposed that the unlooked-for arrival of our Lord's five disciples contributed to make more apparent, if indeed it did not cause, the insufficiency of the supply of wine. However this may be, Mary, who was the first to notice that the provision of wine was running short, was anxious that no one else should perceive this evidence of poverty, and betaking herself to Jesus, she said, "They have no wine."

In these simple words of Mary, it is easy to see a modest request prompted by her thoughtful charity, and by her implicit trust in the hitherto hidden power of our Lord to perform miracles. It was a secret, a brief appeal of His mother to One who had ever been ready to comply with

<sup>1</sup> **Fouard**, vol. i, p. 140; **Andrews**, p. 162, sq.; and also, article Cana, in **Vigouroux**, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, p. 111, sq.

her least desires, and it was made at the time which she thought the most opportune to spare a public disgrace to the family which had invited Him and His disciples. It is true that Mary was asking for a miracle, but in so doing, she cannot have been guilty of fault, since she asked or rather suggested the very thing which Jesus did.

**3. The Answer of Jesus.** In answer to the request of His mother, our Lord said: "Woman, what is to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come." These words sound indeed very harshly to our ears, but on the lips of our Savior, they had not the same meaning as in our modern languages. First of all, the word "woman" was compatible with the utmost respect, for Jesus will use it later on, when about to die on the cross He will give to Mary one of the most tender proofs of His affection (John xix, 26), and passages from the classics might be quoted, where the same word is used without implying the least tinge of disrespect or blame.<sup>1</sup> The title "woman" here given to Mary seems simply to indicate that a relation different from that of mother to son is referred to. The next words, "what is to me and to thee?" have not necessarily a reprehensive sense in Semitic languages (cfr. Jud. xi, 12 ; II Kings xvi, 10). They denote usually, however, some divergence between the thoughts and ways of persons so brought together. Perhaps Jesus used them here, to express the following opposition. His mother seemed to imply that He was ever to be in the same dependence on her maternal wishes and suggestions, whereas, now that He was entering on His public career, our Lord intended to work independently of them. The last words of our Savior to Mary, "My hour is not yet come," have been understood in various ways, and it may be that the best one — because in greater harmony with other expressions of our Lord — is that the time appointed for

<sup>1</sup> See Fouard, vol. i, p. 145, footnote 2.

Him to work miracles had not yet fully come. But our Blessed Lady fully confident that her Divine Son had not completely rejected her request, or rather that He would grant it, said to the waiters, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."<sup>1</sup>

**4. The Change of Water into Wine.** The details which follow in the sacred narrative about the change of the water into wine, bespeak the report of an eye-witness. St. John speaks not only of water-pots used for the frequent ablutions of the Jews—in which consequently no wine could be supposed to remain—but of their number, of their material, and of their approximative size ("they contained two or three measures apiece," that is, between about eighteen and twenty-seven gallons). He remembers the astonishment of the chief steward of the feast, who, not knowing the miraculous origin of the wine he had just tasted, hastened to address complimentary words to the bridegroom whom he thought had kept till then his best wine. Finally, he had apparently ascertained the reality of the miracle from the mouth of the waiters who had drawn the water and had carried it to the chief steward, and his faith and that of his fellow disciples was strengthened by this first manifestation of the miraculous power of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> See **Maldonatus**, in Joannem, h. loco; **Didon**, Jesus Christ, 1, book ii, chap. iv.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### FIRST YEAR'S MINISTRY.

#### § 1. EVENTS IN JUDÆA (APRIL-DECEMBER, A. D. 27).

##### I. DEPARTURE FOR CAPHARNAUM.

1. **Short Sojourn in Capharnaum.** After the wedding-festivities at Cana were over, our Lord, together with His mother, His brethren and His disciples went down to Capharnaum (John ii, 12), a town some twenty miles distant from Cana and situated on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Pasch of the Jews was near at hand, and Capharnaum would be a convenient place to join the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In Capharnaum Jesus remained only a few days which were probably marked by some great miracles alluded to in St. Luke, iv, 23, but nowhere detailed in the Gospel narrative; and then, He started for the Holy City, accompanied by His disciples, as may be inferred from the fact that St. John (ii, 22) speaks of them as being with Him, when passing through Samaria on His return from Judæa.

2. **Three Roads to Judæa.** In our Lord's time three principal roads led from the neighborhood of the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem. One of them joined the great Egypt and Damascus road where it passes nearest to the Lake of Genesareth (near Khân Minyeh), left it two or three miles west southwest of Naim, and thence proceeded south

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through Samaria. A second road followed along the Lake of Gennesareth, then passed through Scythopolis, Phasælis, Archelais and Jericho, crossed westward the Wilderness of Judæa and through Bethany and Bethphage reached the Mount of Olives and the Holy City. The third road started, like the preceding, from the south end of the Lake of Gennesareth, passed through Peræa, crossed the Jordan a little to the northeast of Jericho, and thence reached Jerusalem through Bethany and Bethpage. At His last departure from Galilee our Lord will follow this last road, but it is probable that for His first departure from that province, He took the second road, which, as it appears, was the one usually taken by the caravans which left the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.<sup>1</sup>

## II. FIRST PASCH IN JERUSALEM (APRIL 11-18).

1. **The Cleansing of the Temple.** After a journey of about ninety miles Jesus reached the Holy City, probably a few days before the Paschal celebration which this year fell on the 11th of April, and which marks the beginning of our Lord's public ministry in **Judæa**. St. John, who alone records the events connected with this sojourn of our Lord in Jerusalem, mentions first a cleansing of the temple by the Son of God (John ii, 14-22), and this cleansing is plainly distinct from the later one recorded by (Matthew xxi, 12-16; Mark xi, 15-19; Luke xix, 45-48).<sup>2</sup> On the occasion of the greatest Jewish solemnity, the *outer court* of the temple had gradually been transformed into a market-place, particularly for the convenience of the Jews who coming from distant countries were under the necessity of purchasing the victims for their offerings on the spot, and of exchanging their foreign money stamped with idolatrous

<sup>1</sup> **Didon**, *Jesus Christ*, book ii, chap. iv, last footnote; **Ellicott**, *Historical Lectures on the Life of Our Lord*, p. 121, footnote 2.

<sup>2</sup> **Fillion**, *St. Jean*, p. 40; **Meyer**, on *St. John*, American edition, p. 111.

images into the sacred shekel with which alone the temple dues could be paid. From the strong language of our Lord in driving out of the place the traders in sheep, cattle and pigeons, and in overthrowing the tables of the money-changers, it seems probable that not only a fair and honest, but even an extortionate, traffic was carried on within the *Court of the Gentiles*.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, it is plain that the close neighborhood of a noisy market must have greatly interfered with the religious stillness which ought to have prevailed within the *inner courts* for either the silent prayer of the solitary worshipper or the deep recollection of the multitude when attending the more important ceremonies. All this was, indeed, an awful desecration of God's House, but the Jewish priests derived a large profit from the whole traffic, and hence they had sanctioned what they ought to have considered as an intolerable profanation of the temple.

It was then the honor of His Father's house that Jesus came forward to vindicate when driving buyers and sellers with an irresistible majesty, as St. Jerome says, He exclaimed, "Make not the house of my Father a house of traffic." Any Jew might rise up in a holy zeal against public abuses (Numbers xxv, 7), but the most ardent zealots generally justified their proceedings by unquestionable signs of the divine approval (III Kings, xviii, 23, 24). By His conduct, Jesus had rebuked not only the people at large, but also the Jewish leaders. The temple officials came therefore to Him and requested a sign whereby He would prove His authority "to do these things" (John ii, 18).

"Destroy this temple," replied Jesus, "and in three days I will raise it up." These words seemed to refer to the temple in which He and His questioners were standing; but they referred to a much holier Sanctuary of the Divinity." "He spoke of the temple of His body" (John ii, 21). The great proof which our Lord was to give to all was indeed His

<sup>1</sup> Geikie, Life and Words of Christ, I, chap. xxx.



resurrection after He had been put to death by the Jewish leaders, but this connection between His answer and their question was realized even by His disciples only much later, when they remembered His prophetic words and derived from their fulfilment an increase of their faith (John ii, 22). The words of Jesus were therefore understood as referring to the magnificent edifice, the rebuilding of which begun long years before by Herod, was still unfinished, and they were maliciously construed by His enemies into a blasphemous boast against the House of Jehovah (John ii, 19; Matt. xxvi, 61).

**2. Some Conversions.** In addition to the cleansing of the temple, St. John records that during the Paschal festivities our Lord performed in Jerusalem several miracles which he does not report in detail. They made such an impression that "many believed in His name," that is, believed Him to be the Messiah (John ii, 23). But Jesus knowing that these believers were far from possessing deep convictions, showed the greatest reserve towards them (John ii, 24, 25).

**3. Conversation with Nicodemus.** It was differently, however, with Nicodemus, a personage whom St. John introduces as a Pharisee, and a member of the Sanhedrim (John iii, 1; vii, 50). This man feared indeed the hostility of most of his colleagues already opposed to Jesus, yet having seen the miracles which our Lord had performed, he was not only convinced that Jesus was a teacher truly sent by God, he also desired to inquire from Him the nature of the Kingdom of God and the manner in which men were to enter into it. He therefore came to Jesus during the night, and learned to his great astonishment that even the Jews had "to be born again of water and the Holy Ghost," that is, to be spiritually regenerated in the vivifying waters of Christian baptism, in order that they might be admitted into the King-



dom of God (John iii, 2-5). Of course the action of the Spirit which gives to the waters of baptism their vivifying power, is hidden, but because of this, it should not be denied any more than the action of the wind, the presence of which is ascertained only by its effects (John ii, 7, 8), and moreover this spiritual regeneration had been predicted by the prophets of old (John iii, 9, 10; Zach. xiii, 1; Ezech. xxxvi, 24, sq.).

After this summary of our Lord's dialogue with Nicodemus, the beloved apostle reports the substance of a beautiful discourse delivered by Jesus apparently in connection with the interview of Nicodemus (John iii, 11-21).<sup>1</sup>

### III. MINISTRY THROUGH JUDÆA (JOHN III, 22-36).

**1. Its Extent.** When the companies of pilgrims started from Jerusalem for their own homes, our Savior went with His disciples "into the land of Judæa," that is, into the province of that name as distinguished from its chief city. It is impossible to determine the extent of Judæan territory through which our Lord went at this time. From John iii, 22 b, and iv, 3, 4, it may however be inferred that He visited several parts of Judæa, and from Acts x, 37, it seems probable that He went through most, if not all, the rural districts of that province.

**2. Its Character.** The same uncertainty prevails about the character of our Lord's teaching during this same period. It may be conjectured, however, that His preaching was of the same preparatory kind as we find described a little later in St. Matthew iv, 17, where we read "FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH AND TO SAY: DO PENANCE, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND," and that consequently it was substantially the same as the preaching of His holy precur-

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, *Life of Christ*, p. 172, sq.

sor. Those who listened to His words received from the hands of His disciples (John iii, 22 c ; iv, 2) a baptism which was most likely identical with the rite administered by St. John the Baptist.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the forerunner of Jesus was still baptizing in a place called "ENNON, NEAR SALIM," but which it is impossible to identify at the present day. It was more probably on the west side of the Jordan (cfr. John iii, 26), in Judæa, and apparently not far distant from the place where our Lord's disciples baptized the repentant multitudes.<sup>2</sup>

This circumstance of Jesus and John teaching and baptizing at the same time in the vicinity of each other, naturally excited some speculation among the people. Some of John's disciples fell into an argument "concerning PURIFICATION" (that is, concerning *baptism*) with a Jew, and they referred the question to John himself for his decision. These disciples were jealous for their master's honor, and could not bear that one whom they thought was greatly indebted to him should baptize and attract more followers than he (John iii, 25, 26). But John had nothing of this feeling of jealousy, and he earnestly endeavored to remove it from the heart of his disciples. He reminded them that he had always asserted that he was not himself the Christ, but greatly inferior to Him ; and in the most emphatic manner, he reasserted his own secondary station. He was but the humble attendant on the bridegroom, Christ was the bridegroom himself ; his own doctrine was that of earth, that of Christ was of heaven ; it was only right that the Son of God and the author of eternal life "should increase," and his precursor "decrease" (John iii, 27-36).

3. **Its Length.** Our Lord's ministry in Judæa extended until the month of December, A. D. 27, as we may

<sup>1</sup> The principal reasons for this opinion are well given by **Fillion**, St. Jean, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> **Andrews**, pp. 173-175 ; **Fillion**, St. Jean, p. 58 ; **Smith**, Bible Dictionary, art. *Enon*.

infer from His words to His disciples when passing by Sychar "there are yet FOUR MONTHS, and THEN THE HARVEST COMETH" (John iv, 5, 35), for these words can be understood only of the first crops which, in Palestine, are gathered in during the month of April. His departure was a hasty one (John iv, 4), most likely because of an imminent danger due to the very great offence which His success, far greater than that of John, gave to the Pharisees who, at the time, wielded so much power in the province of Judæa (cfr. John vii, 1-3, 25, 32). We learn moreover from the Synoptists (Matt. iv, 12; Mark i, 14; Luke iv, 14, 15) that the imprisonment of John the Baptist, which probably occurred at this time, contributed to cause our Lord's return into Galilee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, pp. 178-182.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FIRST YEAR'S MINISTRY.

§ 2. EVENTS IN GALILEE (DECEMBER, A. D. 27—APRIL, A. D. 28).

I. RETURN TO GALILEE THROUGH SAMARIA (JOHN IV, 1-44).

1. **Place and Hour of Meeting with the Samaritan Woman.** As our Lord wished to reach quickly the friendly province of Galilee "He had of necessity to pass through Samaria" (John iv, 4),<sup>1</sup> which lies between that province and Judæa. A rapid and fatiguing journey brought Him to the neighborhood of Sychar, a small Samaritan town most likely to be identified with a village known as 'Askar, on the southern base of Mt. Ebal, some forty miles north of Jerusalem. At the foot of Mt. Garizim, on the other side of the valley of Sichem, was the well which the patriarch Jacob had dug when he bought the ground "of the children of Hemor, the father of Sichem" (Gen. xxxiii, 19; John iv, 12). This well still exists, although it seems there is water in it only during the rainy season. It has a diameter of nine feet and an actual depth of about seventy-five feet. It is on the low wall of masonry built around the brim of Jacob's well, that our Lord sat to rest Himself, whilst His disciples entered the town to purchase provisions. It was about the sixth hour or midday according to the Jewish manner of reckoning from sunrise to sunset, the usual hour indeed for the principal meal of the Jews,<sup>2</sup> but not the usual one for women to come

<sup>1</sup> See Josephus, Life, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, Life, 54; Andrews, pp. 184, 185.

to fetch water. While, however, Jesus sat waiting at the well, a woman came from the town with her waterpot on her head to draw water from this famous and perhaps more palatable spring.

**2. The Conversation.** Then occurred between our Lord and the Samaritan woman a conversation interesting both in itself and in its results. It was begun by our Savior who said to her "Give Me to drink." Astounded that such a request should be made to her by one whom she knew not to be her countryman, either from His dress, or perhaps His dialect or pronunciation, she inquired how He could thus address a Samaritan so hated and despised by the Jews. Drawing, as usual, His similitudes from present circumstances, He excited her wonder by speaking of "living waters" at His command, "springing up into life everlasting" (John iv, 10, 14), and increased it by a proof of His supernatural knowledge of her own private life; and at length He distinctly announced that the local worship, both on Mt. Garizim and at Jerusalem, was soon to give place to a more sublime faith coming from the Jews as from the chosen people. The Samaritan woman replied that this might be on the coming of the Messias "who will tell us all things"; and then she heard from the Stranger's own lips an explicit declaration that He was the Messias.

**3. Jesus in Sychar.** At this moment, the disciples returned with the provisions they had bought, and they wondered that Jesus talked with one of the hateful race; they did not dare, however, to expostulate with Him. Meanwhile, the woman herself had quickly returned to the town and made known to the inhabitants what had occurred between her and One who might indeed be the Messias. Accordingly, the Samaritans crowded forth to see our Savior, and invited Him to tarry with them. Complying with their request, He

remained two days in Sychar ; and to the number of those who had believed in Jesus on the woman's report of His supernatural knowledge, many more were added who having heard His sacred Words, were convinced that He was "indeed the Savior of the world."

## II. EVENTS BEFORE THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY THROUGH GALILEE.

1. **Going back to Cana.** After His short stay in Sychar, our Lord soon entered Galilee and probably directed His steps towards Cana before repairing to Nazareth (cfr. John iv, 44, 46 ; Matt. iv, 13). As He went along, He preached repentance and the near coming of the kingdom of God (Matt. iv, 17 ; Mark i, 15), and in the various villages He traversed, people welcomed Him, for they had witnessed His miracles at the Pasch which they also had celebrated in Jerusalem (John iv, 45). Not long after His arrival at Cana, the rumor of His return reached Capharnaum, only about twenty miles distant. At this news, "a certain ruler whose son was sick in Capharnaum," and who is thought by many to have been **Chuza**, the steward of Herod Antipas, came to Jesus, beseeching Him to come down to Capharnaum and heal his son, and our Lord wrought the miracle requested of Him without departing from Cana. Thus, then, the second return of Jesus from Judæa was marked, like the first, by the performance of a miracle in Cana of Galilee (John iv, 54).

2. **Visit to Nazareth.** Next our Lord visited Nazareth "where He had been brought up" (Luke iv, 16-30). When the Sabbath came round, He went into the Synagogue, and stood up to read Holy Writ in the public service. He unrolled the volume of *Isaias* that was tended to Him, and read in the ears of all, the portion of it which was either appointed for the day or selected by Him. It was taken from the sixty-first chapter of *Isaias* and universally understood of the Mes-

sias (Luke iv, 17-19). Then He sat down assuming thereby the part of expounder, "and the eyes of all in the Synagogue were fixed on Him" (Luke iv, 20). He proclaimed that the prophet's words were fulfilled in Himself and His ministry, and all "wondered at the words of grace which proceeded from His mouth." Soon, however, their feeling changed when they contrasted His lowly origin with His lofty claims; and when our Savior bade them remember that "no prophet is accepted in his own country," and that, as He illustrated by several instances in Holy Writ, God chose at times other persons for His favor than those who seemed likely, they rose up, thrust Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, that is, to the cliff of limestone rock, about thirty or forty feet high, which overhangs the Maronite convent at the southwestern corner of the town. In their fury, they wanted to cast Him down headlong, but by an exercise of Divine power "He passed through the midst of them, and went His way."<sup>1</sup>

3. **Settling down in Capharnaum.** The next day Jesus was on His way to Capharnaum, a town in which resided the grateful courtier of Herod whose son He had quite lately healed, and which our Lord selected as His own home (Matt. ix, 1) and the centre of His work. Capharnaum had much to recommend it to Jesus for this twofold purpose: He could feel more at home in a place far removed from the Judæan authorities, amidst a mixed and consequently less fanatic population, which, moreover, had already experienced the beneficial effects of His miraculous power. In this fishing town, His disciples could easily pursue their avocation of fishermen, and Himself could at any time be carried to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee where He would find greater quiet or security. Finally, from Capharnaum, as from a centre of operation, our Lord could easily start on

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Milman, *History of Christianity*, I, book i, chap. iv.



His missionary journeys through Galilee on the west, Trachonitis on the north, Decapolis and Peræa on the east and south.

Capharnaum was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and towards its northern end. Travellers, however, do not agree about its precise site. Some place it at **Khan Minyeh**, at the northeastern end of the plain of Gennezareth; others identify it with **Tell Hum**, which is about two and a half miles northeast of Khân Minyeh, and which has in its favor extensive ruins among which the remains of a synagogue have been discovered.<sup>1</sup>

The Sea of Galilee, called also the Lake of Gennezareth, is about 60 miles northeast from Jerusalem and 27 east from the Mediterranean Sea, and in size and shape it is somewhat similar to our Lake Winnepesaukee. It is an irregular oval, the broad end of which is toward the north, and it is 13 miles in length, from four to seven miles in width, and 165 feet in depth in its deepest part. Its shores are surrounded by hills, which on the west side are broken by broad valleys with streams descending to the lake, and between the hills and the water edge there is a narrow level belt which, in the springtime, is covered with verdure (Matt. xiv, 19; etc). On the western shore the principal towns were formerly **Bethsaida**, **Capharnaum**, **Corozain**, **Magdala** and **Tiberias**, but they have all long disappeared except the town of Tiberias and the wretched village of El Mejdal (ancient Magdala).

**4. The Second Call of Four Apostles.** In our Lord's time, as at the present day, the waters of the lake abounded in fish, and it is probably at the early period of His public ministry at which we have arrived, that occurred the miraculous draught of fishes detailed in St. Luke v, 1-11 (cfr. also Matt. iv, 18-22; Mark i, 14-20), and on the occasion of

<sup>1</sup> See **Vigouroux**, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, art. Capharnaum; **Andrews**, pp. 224-238; Bible dictionaries, **Smith**, **Schaff**, **Easton**, etc.



which Jesus extended a second call to Peter, Andrew, James and John. He intended that they should become "fishers of men," and wished that for this purpose they should leave "all things" and be in constant attendance on Him. They instantly obeyed, and in their company He returned to Capharnaum, and taught in the Synagogue on the Sabbath. On that occasion, He for the first time performed the miracle of casting out an unclean spirit. This excited the strong amazement of the people and contributed much to extend His fame. On leaving the Synagogue, He entered the house of Peter whose wife's mother lay ill of a fever, and He healed her. The report of these two miracles being spread through the town, as soon as the Sabbath day was ended, the people thronged to the house, bringing to Him the sick of every disease, and He healed them all, enjoining at the same time the strictest silence upon the evil spirits whom He expelled, lest by disclosing at this time His Messianic character, they should cause people to conceive premature and unfounded expectations as to His future work (Mark i, 21-34; Luke iv, 31-41; Matt. viii, 14-17).

### III. FIRST CIRCUIT OR MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Very early the next morning Jesus was praying in a solitary place outside of Capharnaum, when His disciples having found Him out, entreated Him to return to the town. This He refused to do, in order to pay an immediate visit to other places in Galilee. Accordingly He started with His disciples on his first circuit through that province. "We have no sufficient data to determine the local order of these visitations; but it is only natural to suppose that He would first visit the places near Capharnaum, and then those more remote (Mark i, 38)." . . .

In going "through all Galilee" (Mark i, 39) "His common mode of procedure was apparently this: on entering a

city where there was a synagogue, He availed Himself of the privilege which His reputation as a Rabbi and Prophet gave Him, to teach the people from the Scriptures. This He did upon the Sabbaths and synagogue days. . . . At other times, He preached in the streets or fields, or sitting in a boat upon the sea; in every convenient place where the people were willing to hear Him. His fame as a healer of the sick caused many to be brought to Him, and He appears in general to have healed all (Mark vi, 56; Matt. ix, 35). His sojourn in any single village was necessarily brief, and therefore those who had been really impressed by His works or words, and desired to see or hear Him more, followed Him to the adjoining towns or sought Him at Capharnaum. The disciples do not appear to have taken any public part as teachers. The expenses of these journeys were probably borne by the contributions of the disciples, and by the voluntary offerings of those who had been healed and of their friends. . . . It should also be noted as a characteristic of the beginning of His ministry, that we do not find any open avowal of His Messianic claims."<sup>1</sup>

The Gospel narrative affords us no particulars of our Lord's first missionary journey. Only one miracle, the healing of a leper, is recorded in detail, and this because the cure of a leper was in every instance and by all traced to the direct agency of God.<sup>2</sup> This helps us to understand why Jesus, knowing perfectly the stupendous effect which the news of such a miracle would produce over the people's minds, strictly imposed silence on the healed man, lest erroneous Messianic expectations should be confirmed among the Jewish people (Matt. viii, 1-14; Mark i, 40-44; Luke v, 12-14).

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, pp. 241, 242.

<sup>2</sup> Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, p. 491, sq.

## IV. AFTER FIRST CIRCUIT.

Our Lord's command was disobeyed by the leper who everywhere published what Jesus had done. In consequence, as soon as it was known that He was returned to Capharnaum, the multitude gathered around His ordinary residence, probably Peter's house, filled the room and hung about the door. Pharisees and Doctors of the Law "out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa and Jerusalem" had come to see and hear the wonderful prophet, ready to take exception to everything He said or did. The healing of a paralytic as a proof that "the Son of Man" had the power to remit sins, filled them with indignation towards one whom they considered as a blasphemer (Mark i, 45 ; ii, 1-12 ; Luke v, 15-26 ; Matt. ix, 2-8).

Immediately after these events, our Lord went forth by the seaside and seeing the tax-gatherer Levi sitting at the receipt of custom—probably at the point where the great road from Damascus comes to Capharnaum—He said to him "Follow Me." And the publican Levi—called also Matthew—leaving all things, rose up and followed Jesus (Mark ii, 13, 14 ; Luke v, 27, 28 ; cfr. also Matt. ix, 9).

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SECOND YEAR'S MINISTRY.

#### § 1. SECOND PASCH (MARCH A. D. 28) UNTIL SECOND CIRCUIT IN GALILEE.

##### 1. Occasion of Our Lord's Sojourn in Jerusalem.

The second year of our Lord's public ministry is marked like the first, by a short sojourn in Jerusalem. St. John, who alone makes us acquainted with this event, states that it was occasioned by the desire of Jesus to celebrate in the Holy City "A FESTIVAL DAY OF THE JEWS," but as he does not say *which* Jewish festival this was, Biblical scholars are divided between four important feasts which our Savior might have celebrated in Jerusalem after His return from Judæa in December of the preceding year.

These festivals are (1) that of **Purim**, falling in March, and instituted to commemorate the deliverance of the Jewish exiles from the cruel designs of Aman (cfr. Esther iii. 7 ; ix, 24) ; (2) that of the **Passover**, in April ; (3) the feast of **Pentecost**, occurring this year on the 19th of May ; (4) the feast of **Tabernacles**, falling on the 23d of September. Strong arguments point to the **Paschal** festival as the one referred to by St. John, and indeed the Passover was pre-eminently the "festival day of the Jews."<sup>1</sup>

##### 2. Prominent Features of Our Lord's Sojourn in Jerusalem. This visit of Jesus to the Holy City has a

<sup>1</sup> Fouard, vol. i, appendix vii ; Andrews, pp. 189-198.

special importance in the public Life of our Lord, for on the occasion of the miracle at the pond of Bethesda which He wrought at this time (John v), He manifested His Messianic and Divine character more openly than before, and in consequence, the official classes of Judæa showed themselves more hostile to Him.

The pond of Bethesda was most likely situated on the northeast side of Jerusalem, a little northwest of the present church of St. Anne and not far from St. Stephen's gate.<sup>1</sup> It had five porches, and was much resorted to for the miraculous power of its waters. Among the crowd of sufferers who had gathered there, our Savior took notice of one who had been disabled by disease for thirty-eight years, and as he had no friend to lift him into the pond, "when the water was troubled," Jesus took pity on Him, healed him by His word, and sent him away carrying his bed (a thin mattress or blanket) with him.

This happened on a Sabbath, and the carrying of any burden on such a day was looked upon as one of the most heinous offences against the Law, so that the sight of a man thus violating the statute in a public place, naturally excited the greatest attention. The clamor of the official classes was raised at once against the man, and when they learned that Jesus was the author both of the cure and of the violation of the Sabbath, they resolved on putting Him to death and summoned Him before the Sanhedrim.

Our Lord profited by this trial to declare more openly than on His first visit to Jerusalem, His equality with the Father, His Messianic character, His right to Divine honor, and to prove to His judges that His claims, however astonishing to them, rested not on His own assertion alone, but also on the unquestionable testimony of John the Baptist, of His

<sup>1</sup> About the probable site of the pool of Bethesda (in Greek *Bethesda*), *cir.* Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*; Easton, *Bible Dictionary*; Fouard, vol. i, appendix viii.

own miraculous works, and even of the writings of Moses their great lawgiver.<sup>1</sup>

These assertions appeared blasphemous in the eyes of "the Jews," and they determined to press more earnestly against Jesus the capital charge. The sacred narrative does not, however, state whether any sentence was passed against Him on this occasion. Yet, it may be gathered from other passages of the fourth Gospel (cfr. John vii, 1, 25-32) that a sentence was actually passed, that Jesus was publicly banished from Judæa, and that He would be seized and put to death if found in that province.

### 3. Events before the Selection of the Twelve.

Banished from Judæa, our Lord withdrew to the safer province of Galilee, but His actions were henceforth closely watched by His enemies, especially on Sabbath days. In fact, no later than on His way back to Capharnaum, they accused His disciples of violating the Sabbath, because passing through a corn field and being hungry they plucked some ears of corn and ate them. But Jesus not satisfied with fully vindicating the conduct of His disciples, openly declared Himself "the Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. xii, 1-8; Mark ii, 23-28; Luke vi, 1-5).

The following Sabbath, He entered the synagogue and was in His turn accused of violating this holy day, because He healed in the presence of all a man who had a withered hand. This miracle of mercy so exasperated the Pharisees, that going out they immediately consulted with their very political opponents, the Herodians, how they might destroy Him (Matt. xii, 9-14; Mark iii, 1-6; Luke vi, 6-11).

To His infuriate enemies Jesus opposed only an adorable mildness which had been predicted by Isaias (xlvi, 1-4), and He retired to the seaside thus giving time for this violent, but transient storm, gradually to subside (Matt. xii, 15-21).

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Milman, History of Christianity, Book 1, chap. v.

There, He performed many miracles of healing which attracted great multitudes, not only from Galilee and Judæa, but also from Idumæa, Decapolis and the region about Tyre and Sidon (Matt. iv, 25), and followed by them, He soon reappeared in Capharnaum and its neighborhood; of course, in presence of such popularity His enemies could not attempt anything against Him.

**4. The Twelve Selected.** Thus freed from open opposition, yet knowing that He should continue to labor but a short time, our Lord made provision for carrying on His work in a more extensive manner during His mortal life, and for completing it after He should be taken away, by the selection of faithful assistants in His ministry (Mark iii, 13-19; Luke vi, 12-16; cfr. also Matt. x, 2-4). With this object in view, St. Luke tells us that "He went out into a mountain to pray, and that He passed the whole night in the prayer of God." When it was morning, He called His disciples and out of them He chose twelve—a number which occurs with significant frequency in Holy Writ—and named them His **Apostles**. Seven of them He had already especially called to be His followers, namely, Andrew and Simon his brother; James and John, the sons of Zebedee; Philip and Nathanael or Bartholomew; and Levi or Matthew the publican. To these He now added Thomas or Didymus (*a twin*); James and Jude, the sons of Alpheus; Simon Chananeus (*zelotes*); and finally, the only apostle from Judæa proper, the traitor Judas Iscariot (*the man from Kerioth*).<sup>1</sup>

These are the men whom Jesus especially called to witness His miracles, to profit by His teachings, to help Him in His ministry, and to preserve and spread His religion. Apparently they had little to recommend them to His choice, for they were almost all uneducated, without wealth, social rank and personal influence; but, in selecting them, Jesus was

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Fouard, vol. i, pp. 246-258.



actually laying the basis of one of the best arguments for the Divine origin of Christianity, namely, that the world should have been converted by means of so few and so humble instruments (cfr. I Cor. i, 27, sq.).

**5. The Sermon on the Mount.** The place pointed out by tradition as the scene of the selection of the Twelve, is a hill on the road from Tiberias to Nazareth, and called from its peculiar shape "the Horns of Hattin." After having chosen His apostles, our Savior descended with them from the mountain-peak to a more level spot (Luke vi, 17), and sitting down in the formal attitude of a Teacher, He delivered His discourse so well known under the name of **the Sermon on the Mount** (Matt. v-vii; Luke vi, 20-40). His immediate audience was indeed made up of His apostles and disciples, and of the great multitudes that had gathered around Him. But He also spoke for future generations, describing a kingdom and a blessedness very different from those which His contemporaries expected, and laying down the Christian form of life for all ages.

**6. Popular favor increased.** This discourse of Jesus, so exalted in its teachings and so authoritative in its tone filled the multitude with admiration (Matt. vii, 28, 29), and new miracles which soon followed on its delivery contributed greatly to increase our Lord's favor with the people at large. On His return to Capharnaum He healed the servant of the Centurion of that city (Matt. viii, 5-13; Luke vii, 1-10) and the next day He raised the widow's son at Nain—a town on the northwestern slope of the Little Hermon and about twenty-five miles southwest of Capharnaum (Luke vii, 11-15). This last miracle produced the deepest impression upon the spectators who proclaimed and spread far and wide their belief that Jesus was "a great prophet" truly sent by God, and this rumor reached St. John the Baptist then a prisoner in



the gloomy fortress of Machærus, nine miles east of the Dead Sea (Luke vii, 16-18).

At this news, the holy Precursor sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus whether He was the Messiah they longed for, and this gave our Lord a fresh opportunity to perform in the presence of John's messengers and of the multitude, those very miracles which it was expected the Messiah would work at His coming (Luke vii, 19, sq.). It is also whilst Jesus was in the neighborhood of Naim that occurred the touching episode of the woman who had been a sinner, and to whom our Savior forgave many sins because she had loved much (Luke vii, 36-50).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> About the question whether this woman is to be identified with Mary Magdalen and Mary of Bethany, cfr. **Dublin Review** (July, 1872), St. Mary Magdalen in the Gospels; **Smith**, Bible Dictionary, art. Mary Magdalen; **Andrews**, pp. 281-286.

## CHAPTER XX.

### SECOND YEAR'S MINISTRY.

§ 2. FROM SECOND CIRCUIT IN GALILEE UP TO THE THIRD PASCH  
(AUTUMN A. D. 28—APRIL A. D. 29).

1. **Second Circuit in Galilee.** (Luke viii, 1-3; 19-21; cfr. also Matt. xii, 22-50; Mark iii, 20-35). After these events, our Lord "travelled through the cities and towns preaching and publishing the Gospel of the Kingdom of God." Of this second circuit in Galilee we know very little. Jesus was accompanied by His twelve apostles and by pious women, of whom three only are named (**Mary Magdalen**; **Joanna**, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and **Suzanna**), and who, out of gratitude for benefits received from Him, "ministered unto Him of their substance."

This journey — which probably lasted a considerable time (Luke viii, 1) — is characterized chiefly by the growing opposition offered to Jesus by the Pharisees in **Galilee**, and by His unsparing censure of their conduct. No means was too low for these hypocrites, provided they could thereby undermine our Lord's popularity. They perverted into madness His omission of taking food one day to attend to the needs of the multitudes, and they induced His friends to attempt to secure His person (Mark iii, 20, 21). Unsuccessful in this direction, His enemies invented another device. The cure of a demoniac having led the people to wonder whether Jesus was not "**the Son of David**" (one of the titles of the Messias), Scribes come from Jerusalem did not

hesitate to spread the report that he held this power from Beelzebub, the prince of the evil spirits. This calumnious charge reached virtually all that our Lord did and said, representing it as coming not from the Holy Spirit that rested upon Him, but from a diabolical source, and this is why He rebuked them with severity, declaring that their sin was a most heinous blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and telling them that they were vipers, only able to bring forth evil fruits from their evil hearts.

Discomfited, but not discouraged, the Pharisees asked for a more public and more undeniable sign of His Messiahship, some such sign as was expected by the multitudes would usher in the Messianic era, and such as our Lord's enemies thought he could not perform. With words of piercing condemnation, Jesus referred them to His future resurrection as the one great sign that would be given them, and declared their extreme guilt in not discerning through His works His supernatural mission and character. As He was yet speaking to the surrounding multitudes our Savior was told that His mother and brethren wished to approach Him, but He refused to break off His occupations, laying down the great principle that the true bond of union with Him was not blood relationship, but a childlike obedience to His heavenly Father, and showing thereby to all how far one so devoted to God's honor and service must be from an alliance with the evil spirits.

## **2. Interval between Second and Third Circuits.**

It was after our Lord's return to Capharnaum that He went to the seaside and was soon surrounded by such multitudes, that to address them, He went into a ship and thence delivered several parables. These parables were stories which described events of common occurrence in such a manner as to suggest to reflecting and well disposed minds truths of the spiritual order, and our Lord now resorted to this manner of

teaching, because on the one hand, the time had come when He should make known to the Jews the true nature and principal features of the kingdom of God, and on the other hand, their national prejudices and Messianic misconceptions did not allow Him to speak without figures (Matt. xiii, 1-53; Mark iv, 1-34; Luke viii, 4-15).

Jesus next crossed the lake, and when in danger from one of those sudden and violent tempests which often disturb the Sea of Galilee, He rebuked the storm and it ceased, to the great wonder of all present (Matt. viii, 18-27; Mark iv, 35-40; Luke viii, 22-25). On the eastern side of the lake, in the district of Gerasa — now called Khersa — occurred the well-known scene of the demoniacs among the sepulchres and the herd of swine (Matt. viii, 28-34; Mark v, 1-17; Luke viii, 26-39).<sup>1</sup> Acceding to the request of the Gerasenes that he should leave their district, our Lord returned to Capharnaum where He attended the feast prepared in His honor by Levi, although many sinners and publicans reclined at the same table. At once the Pharisees found fault with this conduct of Jesus, but He simply replied that He had “not come to call the just, but sinners.” This relentless opposition of His enemies was more than offset by the new miracles which our Lord wrought at this time, namely, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, the healing of two blind men who had been the first to hail Him openly as the “Son of David,” and the healing of a dumb demoniac, for although our Lord prudently recommended silence to those whom He healed, He was disobeyed, and “His fame went abroad in all that country” (Matt. ix, 10-34, cfr. also Mark v, 22-43; Luke viii, 41-56).

**3. Third Circuit up to the Third Pasch.** Our Lord's second visit to Nazareth took place probably during His third missionary journey, and although He came back to it with a

<sup>1</sup> See **Andrews**, pp. 295-300.

fame which filled the land, the people were unchanged and their persistent unbelief prevented Him from doing many mighty works among them (Mark vi, 1-6 a).

It is during this circuit, that Jesus sent forth His apostles with a view to spread more rapidly His doctrine, and also to train to the ministry those who were soon to be the continuators of His work. He invested them with the power of healing diseases, and gave them minute instructions as to the places where they should go, the manner in which they should use their powers, etc. (Matt. x; Mark vi, 7-13; Luke ix, 1-6).

The long duration of this third circuit is implied in these words of St. Matthew ix, 35 : " He went about *all* the cities and villages," and we learn from the same Evangelist (xi, 1) that Jesus continued to teach and preach after the sending of the Twelve. About this time, too, He received the tidings of the death of St. John the Baptist (Matt. xiv, 6-12; Mark vi, 14-16; 21-29; Luke ix, 7-9), and His fame reached Herod for the first time, apparently on the occasion of the greater publicity which the sending of the Twelve, two by two through the different towns of Galilee, gave to the growing influence of our Savior.

After the return of the Twelve our Lord withdrew at once with them into the desert country about Bethsaida, in order to secure for them a much needed rest. There they were anticipated by the great multitudes who were gathered in the neighborhood of the lake at the approach of the Paschal festival, and who in their eagerness to hear Jesus had lost sight of the difficulty to obtain provisions in that forsaken region. But our loving Savior supplied their wants by feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. No wonder that the grateful enthusiasm of these multitudes was at the highest pitch, and that they " strove to make Him King." He, however, bade His disciples sail to the other side, whilst He Himself dismissed the people.

The next morning these same multitudes learned that Jesus had returned during the night to Capharnaum by walking upon the sea, and this news inflamed still farther the intense popular agitation. When He therefore entered the synagogue of that city, all naturally expected that He was at length to declare Himself the Messias, and start His glorious rule. He addressed them, but His discourse was a death-blow to all their earthly expectations, so much so that even many of His disciples abandoned Him, the others doubtless joining in the exclamation of Peter: "LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE. AND WE HAVE BELIEVED AND HAVE KNOWN THAT THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD" (Matt. xiv, 13-36; Mark vi, 30-56; Luke ix, 10-17; John vi).

## CHAPTER XXI.

### FIRST PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(THIRD PASCH, A. D. 29, UNTIL DEPARTURE FOR THE FEAST OF  
TABERNACLES, OCTOBER, A. D. 29.)

#### § 1. THE OPPOSITION OF OUR LORD'S ENEMIES.

THE active ministry of Jesus in *Galilee* was practically brought to a close with His discourse in Capharnaum (John vi). During two years, "HE HAD GONE ABOUT DOING GOOD AND HEALING ALL THAT WERE OPPRESSED BY THE DEVIL," and had thereby given to all manifest proofs that "GOD WAS WITH HIM" (Acts x, 38; John iii, 2). Yet, far from recognizing the Divine character of His mission, the Jewish leaders had constantly opposed Him, and in a short while, they will "THROUGH IGNORANCE" (Acts iii, 17) put to death the "LORD OF GLORY" (I Cor. ii, 8).

Of course, their opposition and ignorance were criminal, yet they may be accounted for in various ways. From infancy, they had been taught to consider the Sabbath as a most sacred day, and in the schools they had learned to set the traditions of the Elders on a par with the revealed Law of Moses. These views they had taught themselves and enforced upon others, and all Jews, whatever their political and religious tenets, strictly acted upon them in their daily life.

Jesus, on the contrary, had repeatedly dared to violate public statutes on the Sabbath and to take no account of traditions which the whole nation regarded as sacred, and of which the Jewish leaders were the watchful guardians. Again, the Jewish officials were considered by the people at large as models of holy living, because of their strict compliance with the least enactments of the Mosaic law and because of their long prayers, rigorous fasts and liberal alms, and hence, they received from all, the highest marks of honor and respect in the market-places or in the synagogues. But, far from paying them this tribute which flattered their vanity, our Lord had solemnly condemned their religious practices as unwelcome to God because tainted with pride and hypocrisy, and quite lately, He had called them a generation of vipers and pronounced them guilty of an irremissible blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. If only the people had let Jesus alone, and had not crowded in the synagogues to hear Him, and had not followed Him in the streets and in the fields anxious to listen to His exalted teachings and believing in His miraculous power, the leaders of the Jewish nation would not have taken the trouble to pursue Him with their opposition. But every increase of His popularity had been a decrease of their own; indeed, in every conflict, the multitude had sided with Him, and in every defeat of His adversaries, they had rejoiced; in short, His success was His greatest crime.

And after all, who was He thus to stand in successful opposition to them? In their eyes, He was but a Galilean peasant, a poor carpenter of Nazareth, an uneducated Rabbi who moved in humble society, who surrounded Himself with poor fishermen, and won popular favor by welcoming the lowest elements of society, for He was "the friend of sinners and of publicans." Evidently such a one could not be, was not, the great and holy King they expected as the political restorer of their nation. The pretensions of Jesus were lofty indeed; He claimed an authority superior to that of the Elders and



apparently to that of Moses himself. He assumed a power over the Temple of God, made Himself equal to the Almighty, claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath, and very recently He had assumed the Divine power of remitting sins. But twice, at least, He had denied to the lawful judges of His claims, the great sign which the Messiah was to give at His coming. The testimony of John the Baptist which He appealed to in His favor either did not refer to Him, or John was mistaken, for according to them no prophet could come from Nazareth. In their eyes, therefore, Jesus was but a bold deceiver of the people, whom He strove to withdraw from their lawful teachers and leaders, and to whom He taught a lax morality, inasmuch as by His free intercourse with sinners and publicans He obviously aimed at destroying all moral as well as all social distinctions. He was but a false prophet, such as Moses described long centuries before (Deut. xiii), for by teaching men not to mind observances which the Jews thought necessary for the faithful discharge of the Divine commands, and by arrogating to Himself the Divine nature and powers, He manifestly tended to withdraw men from the pure worship of Jehovah, from the primary belief of the Jewish religion, namely, the belief in one only God. His miraculous powers they concluded were not credentials of a Divine mission, but rather proofs of a league with the Evil One, like that of the magicians of Pharaoh who performed wonders in their opposition to Moses (Exod. vii, sq.).

These are some of the grounds on which our Lord's enemies based their opposition, and in such frame of mind they naturally thought it lawful to resort to every means to undermine His authority. They secretly plotted against Him, striving to win over to their views their very political opponents, the Herodians. Then they waited until some imprudence on His part, or the fickleness of the people should place Him in their power. During the full flush of His

popularity they had to be satisfied with recalling His lowly birth at Nazareth, and with pushing His friends to treat Him publicly as one out of his senses. At the same time, they entertained an active correspondence with the Pharisees who were at Jerusalem and when re-enforced by a deputation from the latter, they ventured to accuse Him of a league with Beelzebub. But in spite of all their efforts, His prudence had been such as not to leave them a single tangible ground for accusation, and His popularity had been steadily increasing, until after the death of John the Baptist, our Lord's favor with the people reached its climax in Galilee, as we saw at the end of the preceding chapter.

But the longer their opposition had been kept down and the greater His influence over the people had become, the more also the diminution of their own power with the multitudes and their wounded pride imperatively required that they should as soon as possible take a signal revenge upon His public and repeated censures of their teachings and practices.

When, therefore, they left Galilee for Jerusalem on the occasion of the third Pasch of our Lord's ministry, they naturally reported to the ecclesiastical authorities of Judæa all that had taken place during the last month ; how His ever growing success had long reduced to naught all their efforts and how His fame had finally reached Herod himself. But they also added how Jesus having refused the royal diadem offered Him by the enthusiastic people, they had finally betrayed Him into a public declaration equivalent in the eyes of all to a denial of the Messianic dignity. Many of His disciples had in consequence forsaken Him, and only a handful of followers still clung to Him. Now, then, was the time to turn against Him all the national expectations of the people. This the Jewish leaders understood, and the Paschal celebration (John vi, 4) was hardly over when they sent a new deputation of Scribes into Galilee to watch and oppose

Him, and probably also to bring about a close alliance with the Herodians against Jesus.

The third year's ministry of our Lord opened, therefore, with a fierce opposition on the part of the Jewish leaders, and we must now study how Jesus met their efforts against Him.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### FIRST PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(THIRD PASCH, A. D. 29, UNTIL DEPARTURE FOR THE FEAST OF  
TABERNACLES, OCTOBER, A. D. 29.)

#### § 2. HOW JESUS MET THE OPPOSITION OF HIS ENEMIES.

1. **The Open Rupture.** Arrived at Capharnaum, the Scribes who had been deputed by the authorities of Judæa, soon noticed that our Lord's disciples did not practise the washing of hands after the traditionally-prescribed manner before meals ; accordingly they remonstrated with Jesus for not training well His disciples. In the eyes of these emissaries this was a grave neglect of one of the most sacred "traditions of the Elders," with which "all the Jews" complied and which had just been re-enacted in the form of an absolutely unchangeable decree.<sup>1</sup> Without stopping to vindicate His disciples, Jesus called the Scribes "Hypocrites" whose only concern was about outward demonstrations of piety, without any concern about inward devotion to God. He went farther still, and charged them with setting aside the clearest and most important commandments of God by means of their human traditions. He next endeavored to teach the multitude one of those great truths so much lost sight of at the time ; true defilement does not proceed from the outside, but from the evil desires and passions of the heart.

<sup>1</sup> Edersheim, vol. ii, p. 9, sq.; Fouard, vol. ii, p. 6, sq.

These words of our Lord, which were a heavy but necessary blow against merely human and misleading traditions, gave so great offence to the Scribes, that the disciples of Jesus were afraid of the possible consequences of their resentment ; but the calm and significant words of Jesus quieted these fears of His disciples (Matt. x, 1-20 ; Mark vii, 1-23).

Several features of our Lord's reply to the Scribes deserve especial attention. On the one hand, He not only rebuked them for their hypocrisy, as He had repeatedly done in the past, but He pronounced a wholesale condemnation against their traditions, and taught the people a doctrine absolutely opposed to theirs on a point which they considered of the utmost importance. On the other hand, His enemies resented openly His conduct, and apparently for the first time in Galilee, threatened to use violence against Him and His disciples. In a word, we are in presence of a direct attack of His enemies by our Lord, and of an open rupture between Him and the Jewish leaders.

2. **Travels through the Northern Regions.** Our Lord's time, however, to face His opponents resolutely and to the end, though not far, had not yet fully come. Accordingly, we shall soon hear Him recommending silence, both to His disciples and to those whom He healed ; and as He had already avoided going to Jerusalem for the third Pasch of His ministry, so He now avoids moving through Galilee openly as before.

He therefore turns away from Central Galilee and begins His travels through the northern regions. He was accompanied by the Twelve whom it was His purpose henceforth to train in a special manner in view of His approaching death. For this purpose also He sought the greater quiet and seclusion of the heathen territory of **Tyre**. "But He could not be hid," says St. Mark, and after healing the daughter of the Syrophenician women in answer to her won-

derful faith, He left that region (Matt. xv, 21-28 ; Mark vii, 24-30). Passing through the territory of **Sidon**, Jesus probably proceeded along the Phenician frontier to the Jordan and journeyed along the eastern bank of that river.

3. **In the Decapolis.** Thus our Lord reached the heathen territory of the **Decapolis**—a district originally of *ten cities* and now under the immediate Roman rule—where He healed among others a “deaf and dumb man,” enjoining strict silence upon him and upon his friends. But His injunction of silence was not heeded, and the rumor of these wonderful deeds attracted to Him ever-growing multitudes. They continued three days with Him, beholding His miracles and listening to His discourses, and at the end of that time, Jesus moved with compassion upon the needs of the four thousand men before Him, fed them with seven loaves and a few fishes (Matt. xv, 29-38 ; Mark vii, 31 ; viii, 9).

4. **In Magdala and Bethsaida.** After this *second* miraculous multiplication of loaves (cfr. Mark viii, 19), our Savior crossed the Sea of Galilee, and arrived at Magdala (Matt. xv, 39). He was soon met by Pharisees and Sadducees, now combined for the first time against Him. They had come to tempt Him and ask Him a sign from heaven. He reproved their hypocrisy and affirmed that no sign would be given them except the sign of the prophet Jonas. He therefore left them and went across the lake towards Bethsaida, probably situated at the mouth of the Jordan, warning His disciples during the voyage against the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadduces (Matt. xvi, 1-12 ; Mark viii, 10-21). Outside the city of Bethsaida, He restored the sight to a blind man who was offered to Him, and sent him home with the order not to spread the rumor of the miracle (Mark viii, 22-26).

5. In the District of Cæsarea Philippi. From Bethsaida, our Lord probably directed His steps northward and reached the region of Cæsarea Philippi, where, on one important occasion,<sup>1</sup> He asked His apostles, "WHOM DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?" In their answer, the disciples gave the opinions which were then most current among the Galileans, and which amounted to this: "Men generally look upon Thee as one of the forerunners of the Messias." But, continued Jesus, "WHOM DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?" Simon Peter answered in the name of all, "THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD."

Ecclesiastical writers have ever seen in this confession of Peter a distinct acknowledgment of our Lord's Messiahship and Divine nature, and have ever considered as a return for it, the promise of Jesus to make him the foundation of His Church, to constitute him the supreme steward of this immortal edifice, with full powers of binding and loosing in His kingdom. At the same time, our Divine Savior commanded His disciples that "they should tell this to no man" (Matt. xvi, 13-20; Mark viii, 27-30; Luke ix, 18-21).

<sup>1</sup> See Maclear, A Class-Book of New Testament History, p. 218.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FIRST PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(THIRD PASCH, A. D. 29, UNTIL DEPARTURE FOR THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLE, OCTOBER, A. D., 29.)

#### § 3. CONDITION OF MIND OF THE DISCIPLES.

1. **Their Frame of Mind at the Beginning.** Up to the time of their selection by our Lord, the Twelve naturally shared all the prejudices of their contemporaries concerning the person and work of the Messias. At home, and more particularly in the schools where they had studied the traditions and history of their nation, they had learned to derive comfort in the present misfortunes of the Jewish race, from the glorious prospect that a mighty Son of David should soon appear to drive the foreigner from the Land of Jehovah and introduce a world-wide empire with Jerusalem for its capital. As all the faithful Jews of the time, they were under the constant influence of the Scribes and the Pharisees, whose Messianic dreams are well known, and who felt in duty bound to keep alive among their fellow-countrymen the hope of a worldly restorer of the Jewish Theocracy. No wonder then that the frame of mind of the disciples constituted from the very beginning, the chief obstacle to their proper training by our Lord.

It does not seem, however, that for a long time after their first call, the Messianic misconceptions of the disciples led them to aspire after high positions in a Jewish kingdom soon to be set up. This may be accounted for, to a large



extent, by the consideration of their lowly station in life and by the consciousness of their own defective education. But the main reason is probably to be found in our Lord's conduct during the first year of His public life. At first His preaching and His baptism seemed to be but a continuation of those of His holy precursor. His miracles soon multiplied, and were indeed astonishing, but they apparently pointed Him out simply as a great Prophet, who not unlike Elias of old, had to take to flight in order to escape the fury of His enemies. Moreover, He had never laid any public claim to the Messianic dignity during that same period; nay more, He had enjoined strict silence upon the evil spirits whom He expelled, as if their repeated assertions that He was the Messiah were untrue and misleading. Finally, He had remained a poor Rabbi, hardly able to provide for His own sustenance and for that of His disciples. In point of fact, the personal ambition of our Lord's disciples was so little developed during long months after their first call, that they did not hesitate to fall back upon their former avocation as fishermen in order to secure their own living, and that it is only long after their second call, that we discover in the Gospel narrative traces of their hope of a glorious reward for having followed Jesus.

Of course, the Gospels do not afford a complete picture of the frame of mind of our Lord's disciples during their early training. It may be safely stated, however, that had not many things contributed, if not to shake, at least to obscure, their belief in our Lord's Messianic dignity, and thereby long prevented them from conceiving feelings of personal ambition, their aspirations after a high rank in the future kingdom of their Master would be mentioned much earlier in the Gospel narrative.

**2. Conclusions now Reached by the Disciples.**  
The second year of our Lord's ministry was marked by some

important changes in the condition of mind of the Twelve. In spite of the relentless opposition of the Jewish leaders, of the obscure teaching in parables resorted to by Jesus, of His twofold refusal to give the expected sign of His Messiahship, of His disregard of tradition held as sacred by the people at large, the disciples gradually came to the conclusion that their Master was indeed the expected Messiah. This was henceforth a settled conviction in their minds, and when a general desertion followed on the disappointment caused by our Lord's discourse in the synagogue of Capharnaum, St. Peter simply expressed their intimate thoughts during the past months in his ardent reply to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And *we have believed* and *we have known* that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

That these words of Peter were no mere expressions of a transient enthusiastic belief is proved by his later repetition of them in the district of Cæsarea Philippi. Meantime the Galilean multitudes had in large numbers come to think that Jesus was not the Messiah, and under the pressure of the fierce opposition of His enemies, our Divine Savior had withdrawn from Galilee and begun almost as an exile a series of travels through the northern regions, so that the first enthusiasm of the future Prince of the Apostles had ample time and opportunities to vanish. And yet, in answer to our Lord's question, "Whom do *you* say that I am?" he repeated with the same earnest conviction, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi, 16).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reader will notice that in the parallel passages, St. Peter's confession is simply recorded "THOU ART THE CHRIST" (Mark viii, 29), "THE CHRIST OF GOD" (Luke ix, 20), and that even in St. Matthew xvi, 20, our Lord's injunction is to the effect that the disciples "SHOULD TELL NO ONE THAT HE WAS JESUS THE CHRIST" (cfr. also Luke ix, 21). So that, although as the Fathers tell us, St. Peter's confession expressed his own belief not only in the Messiahship but also in the Divinity of his Master, yet a special emphasis is manifestly laid in the Gospel narrative on our Lord's *Messianic dignity*, and this is why we represent it here as a very important conclusion reached by the Disciples of Jesus in contrast with the Galilean multitudes which had recently rejected it.

The apostles had therefore, by this time reached a firm belief in the Messiahship of their Master, and although He forbade them to publish that "He was Jesus, the Christ" (Matt. xvi, 20), He took opportunity of this fresh manifestation of their faith in Him, gradually to prepare their minds for His coming Passion and Death (Matt. xvi, 22). This was all the more necessary because the glorious promise which Jesus had just made to St. Peter, that He would give him all the privileges of the supreme visible head of the Christian Church, was the starting-point in the minds of our Lord's disciples for the hope of a great future in return for having left everything to follow Him. This hope they first cherished in secret, but they soon "disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest" (Mark ix, 33) in the future kingdom of their Master, and at length, Peter ventured to put to our Lord this direct question, which expresses so well their common anticipation, "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed THEE: WHAT, therefore, SHALL WE HAVE?" (Matt. xix, 27).

### 3. Remaining Misconceptions of the Disciples.

Henceforth the chosen Twelve will ever look upon Jesus as the expected Messias, and in this respect, their views regarding our Savior were very different from those of the multitudes which will soon crowd again around Him. But with their contemporaries, the disciples continued to cherish the patriotic dream, that the work of the Messias — consequently of Jesus whom they recognized as such — would consist in the restoration of the Jewish Theocracy in an unprecedented political and religious splendor. Jewish history and traditions had taught them to unite inseparably in thought, Church and State, the political rule and the religious organization, so that our Lord's promise to found His Church upon Peter implied necessarily in their eyes both the renewal of the Jewish religion, and the restoration and extension of the

kingdom of Israel under the rule of the Messiah, the greatest of David's sons. This was of course a capital mistake, but it had taken such a hold of the mind of the Twelve, that despite our Lord's teachings to the contrary, the disciples of Jesus never doubted throughout the last year of his public ministry, that He would soon set up an earthly kingdom. Indeed, the inspired narrative of the *Acts of the Apostles* pictures them on the very day of the Ascension, clinging still to this cherished hope with a tenacity which astonishes us at the present day, and which at that last moment of His visible intercourse with them, prevented Jesus from striving to undeceive them (Acts i, 2-8).

This, then, was the first remaining misconception of our Lord's disciples at the beginning of the last year of His public ministry. They expected a kingdom "of this world," and as a necessary consequence, they continued to cherish the false notions current at the time, concerning the conditions required for the establishment and membership of the Messianic kingdom. Like all their contemporaries, they had entirely lost sight of the dark picture drawn by those prophecies of the Old Testament, which foretold so plainly the sufferings and death of the future Redeemer of the world, and they had dwelt with delight on the glorious prospect afforded by those prophecies, which described a Deliverer coming with great power and majesty, and forcibly subjecting all His enemies to serve Him as a footstool. Only such a misconception on their part regarding the manner in which the Messianic kingdom should be introduced can fully account (1) for Peter's audacity in rebuking our Lord as soon as He openly announced His approaching Passion and Death (Matt. xvi, 21, sq.); (2) for the obtuseness of mind which the Twelve evinced whenever Jesus spoke in the plainest language of these same future events; (3) for the kind of stupor into which the death and burial of our Divine Savior threw His disciples.

Finally, during the remainder of this last year of our Lord's public ministry, the apostles shared also the mistaken ideas of their contemporaries with regard to the conditions of membership of the Messianic kingdom. In fact, several things, such as our Lord's public statement that He had come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, and His words in connection with the Syrophenician woman (Mark vii, 27-29), etc., might easily be construed by the disciples, as implying that the Mosaic Law was certainly to be binding on all the future members of the Christian Church, and that in this same Church, the privileged people of God would naturally be superior to the Gentile converts. However this may be, it is plain, especially from the statements found in the inspired Book of the *Acts*, that in this respect the prejudices of the Twelve had persevered in their minds, not only throughout the last year of our Lord's public ministry, but also after the descent of the Holy Ghost (cfr., for instance, Acts x, xi; xv, 1-31).

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### FIRST PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(THIRD PASCH, A. D. 29, UNTIL DEPARTURE FOR THE FEAST OF  
TABERNACLES, OCTOBER, A. D. 29.)

#### § 4. THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE BY OUR LORD.<sup>1</sup>

1. **Their Training before the Transfiguration.**  
Next to the preaching of the Kingdom of God to the Jews of His time, the greatest concern of our Lord during His public life, was the training of those whom He intended from the first should be the continuators of His missionary labors, and His effective instruments in gathering both Jews and Gentiles into one and the same fold. But the Twelve little suspected these intentions of their Master, and were far from prepared to take in His teachings so contrary to their own Messianic expectations. It was therefore natural that Jesus should disclose to them only gradually the nature of the kingdom He had come to found, and the exact conditions of its membership.

This gradual character of the training of the Twelve by our Divine Savior is particularly noticeable during the period which extends from their selection to our Lord's Transfiguration. They had been chosen to be in constant attendance upon Jesus; and hence from the first they witnessed His wonderful miracles, such as the healing of the centurion's servant, the raising of the widow's son, etc.; they heard His

<sup>1</sup> For this chapter, see: **Bacuez et Vigouroux**, *Manuel Biblique*, vol. iii, n. 153; **Prof. Bruce**, *The Training of the Twelve*, *Passim*.

no less wonderful discourses, His conversations and discussions with the Scribes and the Pharisees; they beheld His holy examples of self-denial, of meekness, of humility, of love of prayer, etc., they noticed also that His favor with the people at large grew steadily and reached such an extent that the multitudes, struck with His unlimited power over nature, diseases, death and the spirit-world, were soon led to consider Him as being very likely the expected Messiah. All this was indeed calculated to train the minds and feelings of the disciples for their future ministry, yet, all this, or almost all this was common to them and to many others who eager to see and listen to Jesus, followed Him from place to place. Gradually, however, to this public, was added a private mode of training. This we first notice in connection with our Lord's public use of parables, the meaning of which escaped the mind of the disciples, and which was explained to them in private by their Master (cfr. Matt. xiii, 11, 18, 36, 51, etc.). Next, it was their privilege to witness miracles withheld from the gaze of the multitudes (cfr. Mark iv, 35-40; v, 37; Matt. xiv, 24-33), and at the same time, their faith in our Lord was strengthened more and more both by His rebukes of their little faith (cfr. Matt. viii, 26; xiv, 31; Mark viii, 17, sq.) and by His direct appeals to their real convictions respecting His Messianic mission (John vi, 68; Matt. xvi, 15).

Long, indeed, our Lord pursued His fatiguing missionary journeys through Galilee, without apparently entrusting to the Twelve a direct share in His labors, but the time came when He judged it advisable that He should send them on a mission like His own, and that they should be furnished with the same miraculous powers as Himself. This was an invaluable training for the disciples who had thus an opportunity to exercise something of their future ministry under the eyes of their Master. As upon their return they told Jesus "both what they had done, and what they had taught," this must have given our Lord an opportunity to make them



remarks for future use. However this may be, as He saw they greatly needed rest, He invited them to retire into a quiet solitude, thus teaching them to withdraw even from ministerial labors, when prudence seems to require it.

Finally, in connection with this training of the Twelve by our Lord before His Transfiguration, two things more are worth notice : (1) His care on at least two occasions not to hurt their national prejudices (Matt. x, 5 ; Mark vii, 26-29) whilst, however, preparing their minds for the admission of the Gentiles in preference to the unbelieving Jews (Matt. viii, 10-12) ; (2) His long delay to speak to the Twelve of His approaching Passion and Death, seeing that "He began" to announce to them these events so important, yet so contrary to their notions concerning the Messianic kingdom, only after St. Peter's emphatic confession in the district of Cæsarea Philippi.

**2. The Transfiguration.** Great indeed must have been the gloom of the Twelve when, after the glorious promise of Jesus to Peter that He would make him the foundation of His Church, they heard their Master calling this same Peter "Satan, savoring not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." Greater still must have been their gloom when they heard Jesus saying openly, not only to His disciples, but to the multitude He had called for the purpose : "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." They had never dreamt that they should pledge themselves to a suffering and despised Messias, that they should fearlessly acknowledge Him before man, under penalty of forfeiting their share in His glorious kingdom, so that they greatly needed the encouraging words which our Lord was then pleased to add : "There are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death, till they see the Kingdom of God coming in power" (Matt. xvi, 23-28 ; Mark viii, 33-39 ; Luke ix, 23-27).



Most ancient interpreters find in the glory of the Transfiguration which occurred six days afterwards, the fulfilment of this comforting promise of Jesus to His disciples (Matt. xvii, 1-13; Mark ix, 2-13; Luke ix, 28-36). The period of the day at which this wonderful event took place is not stated in the Gospel narrative, but as Jesus did not come down from the mountain of the Transfiguration till the day following (Luke ix, 37), it is very probable that He ascended in the evening the holy mount with the three disciples, Peter, James and John, spent there the night in prayer as was His wont, was transfigured at the early dawn, and soon after descended.<sup>1</sup>

The sacred writers do not name the mountain upon which our Lord was transfigured, and for centuries the tradition of both Greeks and Latins has pointed out as this favored spot, Mount Tabor, in Lower Galilee, and a few miles east of Nazareth. Recently, however, travellers and Biblical writers generally reject this tradition which goes back at least to the beginning of the fifth century, because they think that the testimonies of **Polybius** v, 70, 6, and **Josephus**, *Antiq.* xiv, 6, 3; *Wars* i, 8, 7, prove that in our Lord's time the summit of Tabor was occupied by a fortified city, and hence was not the *secluded* spot spoken of in the Gospels. Furthermore, a careful study of the geographical details afforded by the first three Gospels in this connection, has convinced them that at the time of His Transfiguration, our Lord was out of Galilee (cfr. Mark ix, 29) and still in the district of Cæsarea Philippi. Thence they have inferred that the high and secluded mount of the Transfiguration is most likely one of the peaks of Mount Hermon, which arises north of Palestine, to the height of more than 9,000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup>

Three apostles only, Peter, James and John, had been

<sup>1</sup> **Andrews**, p. 358; **Fouard**, vol. ii, p. 28, footnote 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. **Fillion**, *St. Matt.*, p. 334, sq. **Fouard**, vol. ii, p. 27, footnote 2, still holds for Tabor as the mountain of the Transfiguration.

selected by Jesus to witness His Transfiguration, and in descending the mountain they were bidden "tell this vision to no man, till the Son of Man be arisen from the dead." The contemplation of this glorious scene was therefore a great privilege granted to the three apostles, and it was well calculated to strengthen them against the dark approaching hour of their Master's Passion and Death. They complied with His injunction of silence till some years after His Resurrection, their testimony that they had seen His glory on the Holy Mount served to confirm the faith of the early Christians (II Peter i, 16; John i, 14).

**3. Training of the Twelve after the Transfiguration.** After the great event of the Transfiguration, the training of the Twelve assumed a more direct and more constant character. This was required on the one hand, by the nearness of our Lord's death and departure from them, and on the other hand, by their slowness to take in His references to His coming sufferings and death, and to understand the spirit which should animate them as ministers in Christ's Kingdom. Accordingly we see Jesus soon renewing with a peculiar distinctness and emphasis the prediction of His death (Mark ix, 30; Luke ix, 44), actually giving up His active work in Galilee to devote Himself more exclusively to their instruction (Mark ix, 29, 30), and availing Himself of every opportunity to complete their training. Thus after the healing of a demoniac, He taught them the great power of prayer and fasting to cast out evil spirits (Matt. xvii, 14-20; Mark ix, 13-28); after the miraculous paying of a national and theocratic tax for Himself and for Peter—a fact which implied the great prominence of this apostle and gave occasion to the others to discuss "which of them should be the greater in the kingdom of heaven?"—He inculcated on them the necessity of a childlike humility (Matt. xvii, 23; xviii, 4; Mark ix, 32-34; Luke ix, 46-48). Among the lessons taught

them at this time by their Master we may notice those of opportune toleration (Mark ix, 37, sq.); of the necessity of good example (Matt. xviii, 6, sq.); of apostolic severity (Matt. xviii, 16, sq.); of sincere and practically unlimited forgiveness of injuries (Matt. xviii, 21, sq.).

## CHAPTER XXV.

### SECOND PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(AUTUMN-DECEMBER, A. D. 29.)

#### § 1. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (11-18 OCTOBER, A. D. 29).

**1. Departure from Galilee.** The feast of Tabernacles spoken of by St. John (vii, 2,) was the most joyous of the three yearly festivals prescribed by the Law. It had been instituted to commemorate the dwelling of the Israelites in booths in the Wilderness, and at the same time, to return thanks to Jehovah for the completed ingathering of the fruits of the goodly land which He had given to His people, and which He ever claimed as peculiarly His own. It fell on the fifteenth day of the seventh month—September or beginning of October—and was celebrated five days after the great day of Atonement, in which all the sins of Israel were forgiven, a circumstance which added very much to the joyous character of the feast of Tabernacles. During the seven days it lasted, the people dwelt in booths constructed of branches of trees, and erected on the terrace-like roofs of the houses, in the courts of the Temple, in the streets, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Two ceremonies peculiar to this celebration are especially to be noticed. Every morning whilst the sacrifice was being prepared, a priest left the Temple accompanied by a joyous procession, and went to the pool of Siloe to draw water, and after his return he poured it in the sight of all before the

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting and detailed description of this Festival, see **Edersheim**, *The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, chap. xiv.

Lord, as a memorial of the water from the rock of Horeb (Exod. xvii, 1-7). The second ceremony occurred at the close of each day in the Court of the Women, where four golden candelabra were lighted amidst the joyful acclamations of the people, in remembrance of the pillar of fire which had guided their ancestors (Exod. xiv, 21, 22).

As the feast of Tabernacles "was at hand" the "brethren" of Jesus<sup>1</sup> on their departure from Capharnaum — probably a week or ten days before the festival began — came to our Lord. Not believing in His Messianic claims, they ironically advised Him to leave the remote province of Galilee, and to avail Himself of this period of national assemblage at Jerusalem to display His wonderful miracles before all those who would wish to be His disciples (John vii, 1-5).

Jesus replied to His advisers that differently from them, He had to choose the opportune time to present Himself in Jerusalem, because of the hatred the world had for His Character and His Mission. He then added "Go ye up to this festival day, but I go not up to this festival day; because My time is not accomplished." From these words of our Lord His brethren understood that if He intended to go to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles, He did not care to start with them; accordingly they left Him behind in Galilee. Some time after their departure He also started for the Holy City, but with all the secrecy naturally required by the murderous designs of the Jewish authorities (John vii, 6-10).

**2. During the Celebration in Jerusalem.** Meantime, the festivities were going on in Jerusalem, and both the authorities and the people were on the lookout for Jesus. Murmurs secret or half-stifled "for fear of the Jews" ran among the multitudes, some exalting His virtues, others representing Him as a dangerous man (John vii, 11-13).

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the word "brethren" in connection with our Lord has been already discussed, part i, p. 57, sq.

“About the midst of the festival” Jesus appeared in the Temple and took His station as a public teacher. Not having graduated in the Rabbinical schools of the time, He was not supposed to have either the knowledge or the mission required to be considered as an official teacher of the people. Soon, however, His enemies noticed that He had a wonderful knowledge of Holy Writ, and they learned from His own lips, that He had received both His doctrine and His mission from a higher authority than theirs, namely, from God. Having thus defended Himself against encroaching upon the rights and privileges of the Jewish authorities, our Lord directly charged his enemies with violating one of the clearest precepts of the Mosaic Law. His words referred to the unjust sentence of death pronounced against Him at his last sojourn in the Holy City, because He had healed on a Sabbath the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, and all those who were aware of this sentence wondered at the fact that the Jewish rulers should allow Jesus to speak freely, after they had decreed He should be arrested whenever found in Judæa. Some of His hearers asked, therefore, “Have the rulers known for a truth, that this is the Christ?” Others rejected His Messiahship because unable to reconcile their knowledge about our Lord’s origin with their notions respecting the origin of the Messias, whilst more, on the contrary, believed in Him on the strength of His miracles.

Amidst this confused discussion, no one complied with the standing order of the authorities to arrest Jesus; nay more, when the Pharisees finally sent officers to apprehend Him, their messengers overawed by the calm and solemnity of His words, failed to carry out their mandate (John vii, 14-36).

On the seventh, “the last and great” day of the festival, Jesus publicly alluded to the first ceremony above described, the drawing of water from the pool of Siloe, and applying it to Himself, He invited all to come to Him to quench their thirst by means of the waters at His command (cfr. Isai.

xii, 3). This started new discussions among the multitudes about our Lord's Messiahship, and there were actual though unsuccessful attempts to secure His person. Meanwhile, the Sanhedrists found that they could not depend on their own officers to apprehend Jesus, and they censured them for surrendering themselves to the popular deception in favor of one condemned by all the rulers of the nation. Whereupon, one of these very rulers, the Sanhedrist Nicodemus (he that came to Him by night: John iii, 1, sq.), interfered in our Lord's behalf, and pointed out to his colleagues the illegal character of a condemnation of any man without a hearing. His moderate words met with a violent accusation of favoring a self-condemned party, since it was a foregone conclusion in their eyes that "out of Galilee a prophet riseth not." Their meeting, however, was broken up without coming to any decision, perhaps because some members of the assembly agreed with Nicodemus (John vii, 37-53).<sup>1</sup>

3. **After the Celebration.** Early the next day, which was also observed as a festival by the Jews, our Lord who had spent the night at the Mount of Olives, came into the Temple and began to teach the people. This the Jewish rulers had anticipated, and with a view to entrap Him, they brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, and requested His decision concerning her. With His Divine prudence, Jesus escaped the many snares hidden in their request, skillfully turned against His enemies the feelings of the surrounding multitudes, and dismissed the adulteress with these simple words, "Go, and now sin no more" (John viii, 1-11).<sup>2</sup>

On this same eventful Sabbath day, and apparently in the Court of the Women, where stood the candelabra which were

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. **Milman**, *History of Christianity*, book i, chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> The arguments *for* and *against* the genuineness of the episode of the woman taken in adultery are well set forth and examined in **Fillion**, *St. Jean*, pp. 163-166. Cfr. also **Fouard**, vol. ii, pp. 57, 58; **Didon**, vol. ii, Appendix O; **Alford**, *The Greek Testament*, vol. i, *St. John vii*, 53.



lighted every night during the feast of Tabernacles, our Lord alluding to this ceremony, uttered these memorable words: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (cfr. Isai. lxii, 1). This high claim of Jesus was at once challenged by his opponents, and this gave Him an opportunity to multiply His allusions to His Messiahship and Divine descent. The careful reader of the Sacred Text cannot help feeling that the animosity of the Jews was steadily growing as Jesus unfolded His lofty claims, and as He reproached His enemies with their criminal unbelief and murderous designs. At length, their animosity reached its height when He identified Himself with Jehovah in these significant words: "BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS MADE, I AM," and they would have stoned Him to death, had not Jesus hid Himself and gone out of the Temple (John viii, 12-59).

Leaving the Temple, our Lord saw a man blind from his birth, and He miraculously cured him, to the great amazement of the people, who could hardly believe that He was the very man they were wont to see begging at the gate of the Temple. As the cure had taken place when the Sabbath was not yet over, information respecting it was conveyed to the Jewish authorities who, being divided among themselves regarding the character of one who did not keep the Sabbath, resolved to investigate the case with the utmost care. Accordingly, the man who was reported to have been healed was subjected to a lengthened and searching examination. Next, his parents were summoned and closely questioned. Finally, the evidence in favor of the miracle proving unsailable, the Sanhedrists did their best to overawe the healed man, and thereby prevent him from ascribing the miracle to Jesus, of whom they spoke as a sinner, as a man without clearly proved mission. But the one who had received his sight argued so powerfully in favor of our Lord's holiness and Divine mission, that no longer able to bear with him, the



Sanhedrists pronounced against him a sentence of excommunication.

The news of this excommunication soon reached Jesus, who, having sought out the healed man, imparted to him the knowledge that He was the "Son of God," and received from him a fervent homage of grateful adoration (John ix, 1-38).

The contrast between the obstinate blindness of the Jewish leaders, and the readiness of the healed man to recognize our Lord's true character and mission, drew from Jesus strong words about the guilt of His enemies (John viii, 39-41), and also the touching parable of the *Good Shepherd*, which caused so much dissension among His very opponents, and with which He closed His work in Jerusalem at this time (John ix, 1-21).

It is highly probable that after these events, Jesus did not remain long in the territory of Judæa, but rather hastened to return into Galilee, for the Jewish rulers who were bent on His destruction even before the feast of Tabernacles (John vii, 1), must have been much exasperated by their discussions with Him and among themselves during its celebration (cfr. also St. John x, 40).

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### SECOND PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(AUTUMN-DECEMBER, A. D. 29.)

#### § 2. LAST DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE.

1. **Features of this Departure** (Luke ix, 51, 52 a). After a brief sojourn in Galilee, Jesus left this province for the last time. This departure was an important step in the closing period of our Lord's life, and this is why it is described by St. Luke in words peculiarly solemn and impressive, "And it came to pass, when the days of His assumption were accomplishing, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." From the beginning of this journey to the Holy City, Jesus contemplated the ignominious Passion and Death which awaited Him there, and He gave vent to feelings in harmony with this prospect. To those around Him, He appeared like a man who was fully aware of great perils to encounter which demanded a special display of energy, and yet had made up his mind not to relinquish the path which led to them (cfr. Mark x, 32).

St. Luke mentions another feature of this last departure of our Lord from Galilee, namely: its great publicity. Far from going up to Jerusalem "in private," as He had done quite lately, He now appears surrounded with numerous followers. Indeed, their number is so great, that to secure for them sufficient food and lodging in the places they will traverse, He feels it needful to send before Him many messengers. The mission of seventy-two other disciples very soon afterwards added considerably to the public character of this journey,

at the end of which Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph at the head of countless multitudes (cfr. John xii, 19).

**2. Incidents on the Way through Samaria.** Leaving Galilee, Jesus proceeded southward through the plain of Esdrælon and soon reached the border land lying between Galilee and Samaria. Meanwhile, His messengers having arrived at a Samaritan village — very probably Ginæa<sup>1</sup> — had announced His coming as that of the Messias on His way to Jerusalem. The inhabitants of this village shared manifestly the enmity of their race against the Jews, and hence they declined to have anything to do with Galileans, who professed to be on their way to the Jewish capital. James and John would have punished this refusal of hospitality by calling down fire from heaven, and thus would have crushed the first attempt at resistance against Jesus whom they thought was about to assert His Royal claims in Jerusalem. But Jesus rebuked His apostles, saying, "You know not of what spirit you are," and they went into another town, probably in Galilee.

From this town Jesus passed eastward to the Jordan, and soon afterwards entered Peræa (cfr. John x, 40). Before, however, penetrating into this province, He selected and sent before Him seventy-two of His disciples. This large deputation was naturally calculated to gather crowds around Jesus in the places He would traverse, the more so because our Lord's messengers were to confirm their message by great miracles. The instructions which they received were about the same as those given to the apostles in their temporary mission through Galilee, and on the occasion of the menaces threatened against those who will not receive them, Jesus uttered awful woes against the unbelieving cities of Chorozain, Bethsaida and Capharnaum, which about thirty years afterwards were but heaps of ruins (Luke x, 1-17).

<sup>1</sup> See Josephus, *Antiq. of the Jews*, book xx, chap. i, 1: Andrews, p. 386.

The seventy-two rejoined their Master at a fixed place, and evinced the greatest joy because even evil spirits had been subjected to them in our Lord's name. Jesus rejoiced at their success, seeing in it the presage of the downfall of the empire of Satan, but at the same time He taught them that the moral worth of His ministers is proportionate, not to their wonderful powers even over demons, but to their persevering faithfulness to God's grace. Then Jesus praised the Divine decrees that whilst the proud minds would not understand the things of God, the humble would enjoy this inestimable privilege (Luke x, 21-24).

**3. Incidents on the Way through Peræa.** Whilst journeying through Peræa, our Lord availed Himself of every opportunity to train His apostles for their future mission. With them in particular he insisted on the great dangers connected with the possession of worldly riches (Mark x, 23-27), and among the special rewards He promised as a return for their generous giving up of everything to follow Him, He reckoned the privilege of undergoing persecutions for His sake (Mark x, 27-30). During this same journey, He gave them that Divine form of prayer which is so familiar to us under the name of the Lord's Prayer, and which ever suggested to Christ's followers the proper frame of mind to address God in prayer (Luke xi, 1-4; Matt. vi, 9, sq). For their own special benefit He delivered two parables, well calculated to inspire them with confidence and perseverance when putting up their petitions to their heavenly Father (Luke xi, 5-13). He knew how weak they actually were, and how incapable of bearing courageously the persecutions which awaited them, and hence to teach them fearlessness in the discharge of their future apostolic duties, He spoke of God's all-powerful help in dangers incurred for His sake, and of His fearful retribution on cowardice and unfaithfulness to Him (Luke xii, 1-13). Finally, apparently with the same

object in view, He multiplied His similes to impress upon them, on the one hand, the necessity of absolute trust in God for all their needs, and on the other hand, the no less imperative duty of faithfulness and watchfulness, in view of the coming of the Supreme Judge (Luke xii, 22-58).

If from the disciples of Jesus we turn to the multitudes which gathered around Him, it is easy to notice that in His passage through Peræa, our Lord produced a deep impression upon men, of whom probably only a few had already seen and heard Him. Thus, after He had cast out an evil spirit, they began to consider Him as the Messias, and to expect — despite the calumnious charges of His enemies — that He would soon give the great sign which, according to their notions, was to usher in the Messianic era (Luke xi, 14-29). They were most desirous to listen to His words, and hence they crowded around Him in very large numbers (Luke xi, 29); indeed, on one occasion, "they trod one upon another" in their eagerness to hear Him (Luke xii, 1). They admired the depth of His doctrine (Luke xi, 27), recognized His perfect uprightness (Luke xii, 13), and they all rejoiced at the miracles He performed, and at the victories He won in His contests with the Pharisees (Luke xiii, 17).

As might naturally be expected, these enemies of Jesus kept on His track during His journey through Peræa, and did their utmost to undermine His popularity. But our Lord, who was perfectly safe on a territory outside of the direct influence of the Jewish rulers, denounced on every occasion their hypocritical doctrines and practices. Thus a certain lawyer having captiously tried to put our Lord's teaching to a test, received from Him a painful but necessary rebuke for his proud mind and uncharitable heart, in the beautiful parable of the **Good Samaritan** (Luke x, 25-37). Again, when some of our Lord's opponents ascribed His miracles to a league with Beelzebub, He not only repeated the answer He had already given to this malicious charge, but also predicted

the awful fate to which the Jewish leaders were hurrying along their nation (Luke xi, 15, sq.; Matt. xii, 43, sq.). On another occasion, whilst the Pharisees were watching for an opportunity to find fault with His conduct at a breakfast to which He had been invited by one of them, Jesus sharply rebuked them for combining a frivolous scrupulosity with gross insincerity, pride and corruption; and He next charged their Scribes with no less tyrannical insincerity, with persecuting rancor, theological arrogance and exclusiveness (Luke xi, 37-54). Finally, after a miracle of healing which was objected to by His enemies because performed on a Sabbath, our Lord put them to shame by showing clearly to all present that these pretended strict observers of the Sabbath were but inconsistent hypocrites (Luke xiii, 11-17). It seems, therefore, very probable that when some of them reported to Jesus that Herod Antipas (on whose territory He then was) had a mind to kill Him, they simply wanted Him to hasten His passage into Judæa, because they felt it a hopeless task to check the growth of His influence in the country beyond the Jordan (Luke xiii, 31-33).

A last prominent feature of this journey of our Savior through Peræa is connected with the fate which awaited the Jewish nation, and to which Jesus repeatedly alluded as He advanced towards the province of Judæa (Luke xi, 21-26; 49-51; xiii, 1-9; 29, 35). He knew that the nation would not profit by His invitation to penance; nay, more, would even put to death its only Savior (Luke xiii, 32-33), and the contemplation of the coming ruin of the Holy City drew from His loving heart the most tender expressions of grief (Luke xiii, 34-35).

It was in this frame of mind that He continued His way to Judæa, unwilling to remain beyond the reach of His deadly enemies, because He had been sent to lay down His life for the sins of the world (Luke xiii, 32, 33).

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THIRD PART OF THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY.

(DECEMBER A. D. 29 TO FEBRUARY, A. D. 30.)

**1. In Bethany.** After having crossed the Jordan, Jesus followed the wild road from Jericho to Jerusalem, and whilst His disciples pushed up to the Holy City to prepare for the festival of the Dedication now very near at hand, He stopped at the little village of **Bethany**, about two miles east of the Jewish capital. This was for our Lord a convenient place of rest and seclusion, because it was situated on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, which shut it out from the busy city of Jerusalem, and also because it was the home of souls dear to His heart, Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus.

The visit of Jesus at this comparatively wealthy house was most welcome.<sup>1</sup> This is manifest not only from the care and trouble of Martha in preparing food for our Lord, but also from the calm attitude of Mary who, sitting at the feet of Jesus, gave undivided attention to His words. In her anxiety to supply everything for our Lord's comforts, Martha complained to him of the apparent inaction of her younger sister. The reply of Jesus was no less admirable for its delicacy than for its far-reaching import. He gently called the attention of Martha to the distraction which her great solicitude about material things caused her, and then He promulgated the great principle that were the choice to be made between the two great forms of the religious life, between ex-

<sup>1</sup> In assigning to this particular time our Lord's visit to His friends in Bethany, we follow what seems to be the more probable order of events.



ternal service and contemplative retirement, the latter is the better <sup>1</sup> (Luke x, 38-42).

2. **In Jerusalem.** From Bethany our Lord proceeded to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the **Dedication**. This festival occurred in the beginning of winter, in the Jewish month corresponding to part of November and December. It was instituted (B. C. 164) by Judas Machabeus in commemoration of the cleansing of the Temple, after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes (I Mach. iv, 54-59). It reminded the Jews of recent victories over the Gentiles, and accordingly it had become one of the favorite solemnities of the nation now groaning under the hated yoke of pagan Rome. Although this festival could be kept everywhere throughout the land, yet crowds of patriots repaired yearly to Jerusalem for its eight days' celebration, during which time sacrifices were multiplied in honor of Jehovah, the houses illuminated at night, and the whole city enjoyed music and a variety of diversions.

It was about two months since Jesus had last been in Jerusalem, and it was well known to the Jewish authorities that during a great part of that time, He had acted as one seeming to claim the Messianic dignity, yet not explicitly declaring Himself. As soon, therefore, as the Jewish rulers saw Him walking "in the Temple, in Solomon's porch" — probably the eastern portico of the Court of the Gentiles — they came around Him and said, "How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." In His answer our Lord pointed to His well-known miracles as a sufficient evidence for all men disposed to hear, recognize and follow Him. Then He went on, stating that His hand and the Father's hand are one, and finally He declared explicitly "I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE." These last words

<sup>1</sup> **Salmond**, *Life of Christ*, p. 87. Cfr. also sermon xxii of vol. iii of **Cardinal Newman's** *Parochial and Plain Sermons*.



of Jesus plainly amounted to a claim of the Divine Nature, and this the Jews understood so well that at once they took up stones to put Him to death, because of blasphemy, "and because that He, being a man, made Himself God" (John x, 23-32).

Our Lord then argued with His enemies (1) that there was no blasphemy on his part in saying "I am the Son of God," since the very name "*God*" was repeatedly ascribed in Holy Writ to God's created representatives; (2) that the truth of His claim to intercommunion of nature between Himself and the Almighty was clearly evinced by the works of Divine power He had so often wrought before their eyes. Their only reply was an attempt to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hands and withdrew from Judæa (John x, 34-40 a).<sup>1</sup>

3. **Beyond the Jordan.** Threatened with imminent death, Jesus hastened to go again beyond the Jordan into the safer province of Peræa, and He took up His abode in Bethany, where John had formerly baptized. The words which the Holy Precursor had uttered on several occasions about our Lord's character and mission were still rumored in the district of Bethany, and many having resorted to Jesus to ascertain whether He was indeed the Messiah, believed in Him (John x, 40-42).

To this period of the last year of our Lord's ministry we may probably refer the various events which are recorded in Chapters xiv-xvii, 10, of St. Luke. Several of these events show us how, on the one hand, the Pharisees continued their hostility against Jesus, striving to entrap Him (xiv, 1), to undermine His authority with the people (xv, 2), etc.; and how, on the other hand, our Lord unmasked their hypocrisy (xiv, 5, 6), rebuked their pride and their selfishness (xiv, 7, sq.), and

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. excellent pages in **Edersheim**, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii, pp. 229-232.

opposed their false notion, that because they were the first invited guests of the kingdom, they were sure to obtain a place therein (xiv, 16-24). Very different, indeed, were the relations of our Savior with the classes despised by the Pharisees. They willingly drew near Him, knowing that they would find in Him a tender compassion for their manifold miseries, and He, on His part, delivered several touching parables—such as the parables of the lost sheep, of the prodigal son,—on their behalf. Meantime, Jesus inculcated upon His disciples important lessons, such as the necessity of self-denial to follow Him, the enormity of scandal, the duty of forgiveness, and He addressed to them the instructive parables of the **Unjust Steward**, and of **Dives** and **Lazarus**. Finally to the apostles, when they said to Him, “Lord, increase our faith” (the only instance recorded in the Gospels of a direct prayer addressed to Jesus by the **Apostles**), our Lord spoke of the wonderful power of faith with the Almighty, and then He suggested to them the humble frame of mind in which they should discharge their various duties.

4. **In Bethany Again.** Jesus had been for some considerable time beyond the Jordan, when He received from Martha and Mary a message, informing Him of the illness of their brother, Lazarus. The words of their delicate request touchingly indicate the affectionate intimacy existing between our Lord and this family, “Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick” (John xi, 1-3).

Instead of uttering a word of power to heal His friend at a distance, or of hastening to Bethany, Jesus “remained still in the same place two days,” knowing that this illness of Lazarus was to be the occasion of great glory to “God” and to the “Son of God” (John xi, 4-6).

On the third day our Savior proposed to His disciples to go into Judæa again, and they, learning from His mouth that

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their common friend Lazarus was actually dead, agreed to their Master's proposal, despite their fears lest His enemies should apprehend Him and put Him to death (John xi, 7-16).

Lazarus had died on the very day his sisters sent their anxious message to Jesus, and his burial had, according to Eastern customs, taken place a few hours after his death. As our Lord started only after a two days' delay, and spent a day to cross the Jordan and reach Bethany, He found at His arrival that His friend "had been four days already in the grave." It was therefore in the midst of the seven days of mourning, and the friends of the family had come from Jerusalem, only about two miles distant, to pay the customary visit of condolence to the two sisters (John xi, 17-19).

On the news of our Lord's approach spreading through the village, Martha rushed out to meet Him, whilst Mary remained in the house. The words of Martha betrayed at once her faith and her sorrow: "Lord," she said, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died"; then she ventured to mention her hope that He, even now, would do something for them. This was followed by the sublime words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live," and by the wonderful act of faith of Martha, "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Who art come into this world" (John xi, 20-27).

Upon Mary's arrival in tears, and accompanied by weeping friends, the scene became so moving that Jesus, weeping in His turn, and groaning in spirit, inquired where they had laid the dead (John xi, 28-34).

They repaired to the sepulchre, which was a cave, the mouth of which was closed with a large stone. At the bidding of Jesus, and despite the expostulations of Martha, the stone was removed, and after a brief prayer of thanksgiving to His Father, the Son of God uttered these three simple

words, "LAZARUS, COME FORTH!" The summons was obeyed, and Lazarus soon freed from the garments of death which were wound round His body, walked out of the sepulchre (John xi, 35-44).

This was, indeed, a work of Divine power, and many Jews who had witnessed this raising of a man from the corruption of the tomb, believed in Jesus, whilst others probably enraged at what had occurred, reported it to His enemies. Alarmed by this news, the chief priests and the Pharisees hastily convened a meeting of the Sanhedrim, at which the high priest, Caiphas, presided, and in which they debated what was to be done. This great miracle of our Lord could not be denied any more than those He had already performed during His public career, and it was generally felt in the council that if He was allowed to continue His ministry, the people at large would believe in His Messianic claims, rebel against the Roman power, and thereby bring about the ruin of Jerusalem and its Temple, for in the eyes of His enemies it was self-evident that Jesus was not the man who, in the event of a popular uprising, could cope successfully with the legions of Rome (John xi, 45-48).

At length, the high priest arising, declared with disdain that his colleagues "knew nothing at all," and then he cruelly advised them to put Jesus to death. "It is expedient for you," he said, "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." This language of Caiphas was, as the sacred writer tells us, a wonderful though unconscious prediction of our Lord's sacrificial death, and from this time forward, it was a settled resolve with the highest council of the nation, that the public safety required the death of our Divine Savior, and all that was deliberated upon in the following meetings of this same assembly was, how the sentence of death could be best carried out (John xi, 49-53).

Knowing the criminal designs of His enemies, Jesus with-

drew to what He considered a safe distance from the Jewish capital, and went secretly to Ephrem, where He was soon rejoined by His disciples. In this secluded place—about sixteen miles north of Jerusalem—He eluded the furious search of His enemies, and probably spent the time preparing His disciples for His coming death (John xi, 54-56).

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### GOSPEL MIRACLES, OR SUPERNATURAL FACTS RECORDED DURING THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF OUR LORD.<sup>1</sup>

UP to recent times it has been universally felt that the miracles of our Savior are both the most salient feature of His public career and the most convincing proof of His Divine mission. Contemporary Rationalists, however, discard entirely the miraculous element of the Gospels whilst professing to retain their doctrinal teachings. Even outside this radical school, there are many who show a tendency to neglect the supernatural features of our Lord's life as of secondary importance. As a consequence, before concluding this rapid study of our Lord's public ministry, we shall examine however briefly (1) the supernatural character of the miracles recorded in the Gospels, (2) their manifold subject, (3) their chief characteristics.

#### 1. Supernatural Character of the Gospel Miracles.

That the extraordinary events recorded in the Gospels were *real* miracles, that is, actual and observable events which must be referred to a special intervention of God, may easily be inferred from the names of "*wonders*," "*powers*," "*signs*" and "*works*" which they bear in the sacred narrative. These

<sup>1</sup> For this chapter, see **Bacuez et Vigouroux**, *Manuel Biblique*, vol. iii, n. 234, sq.; **Bougaud**, *Christianisme et Temps Présents*, part translated by C. L. Currie under the title, *An Argument for the Divinity of Jesus Christ*, chap. iii; **Trench**, *On Miracles*; **Bruce**, *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*; **Seeley**, *Ecce Homo*, chap. v; **Westcott**, *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, etc.

various names clearly describe them as striking facts, requiring the exercise of superhuman power for their production, and granted by Heaven as credentials of a Divine mission. This inference is all the more natural, because these are the very names under which the works of *Divine* power are designated in the Old Testament and in the writings of the New Testament distinct from the Gospels: the identity of names points to an identity of nature. Furthermore, if both before and after our Lord's time, the supernatural character of the mission of the prophets and of the other messengers of God had to be evidenced by real miracles, the record of which is preserved in the Sacred Scriptures, it is only natural to think that the Divine character of the much more important and difficult mission of our Lord had also to be evidenced by real miracles, by such miracles as those we find described in the Gospel narratives.

Thus then, the reality of the Gospel miracles is *suggested* by their various names in the Sacred narrative, and by the harmony of the Gospels with the other parts of Holy Writ; but from other considerations it is possible to go much farther. It may be shown, for instance, that the reality of the miracles recorded in the Gospels is necessarily implied in the **moral integrity of our Lord's character**. Jesus professed to work miracles; He gave them as God's testimony in His favor and as signs of His Messianic dignity; He vindicated their Divine character when they were ascribed to the agency of the Evil One; He was not only believed by His followers to be endowed with the power of working miracles, but He professed to impart a similar power to His Twelve Apostles and next to His seventy-two messengers, and after they had exercised themselves these miraculous powers, He confirmed them in their belief that He and they worked real miracles; He so acted that His very enemies could not help believing that He actually wrought miracles, and on several occasions He uttered awful woes against flourishing cities and against

the Jewish rulers, because despite the stupendous miracles He had worked to convince them of His Divine mission and character, they had persevered in their rejection of His claims. From all this, it is plain that the veracity of our Lord absolutely requires that we should admit that He worked real miracles, such miracles as those with which the Evangelists make us acquainted.

The reality of these same miracles is no less clearly implied in the **substantial integrity of the Gospels**. Whatever their differences, the four Gospels agree in representing the public life of Jesus as an almost unbroken series of miracles. Hardly a day is described in them at any length without the record of one or several miracles of our Savior. Again, throughout the Gospels, our Lord's miracles are represented either as the occasion or as the subject-matter of His discourses; they are given as the chief reason why His enemies pursue Him as a Sabbath-breaker, and also why many believe in Him and the multitudes follow Him everywhere. In a word, to the attentive reader of the Gospels, it must appear self-evident that the removal of the miraculous element from the Gospel narrative would destroy the connection, the strength and even the meaning of what would remain.

2. **Manifold Subject of the Gospel Miracles.** The first subject of our Lord's miracles is the **world of nature**, which in a variety of ways felt the effect of His unlimited power. At His will, a substance was changed into another, as at Cana of Galilee, or was almost indefinitely increased as in the twofold multiplication of loaves. At other times, the laws which govern the physical universe with so general and so irresistible a sway, seemed deprived of all force in His presence, as when He walked freely upon the sea, or stilled its storm. This first kind of miracles had a great influence upon the minds and feelings of our Lord's contemporaries.



The witnesses of these wonderful deeds felt at once that they were in the presence of a truly Divine power, and this feeling led them to praise God and to ask themselves whether Jesus was not indeed the expected Messiah.

A second class of miracles comprises those which had **man** for their subject. Apparently every great form of bodily infirmity—blindness, leprosy, issue of blood, deafness and dumbness, etc.—was brought before our merciful Savior, who was known never to deny a miracle of healing to the expressed or silent prayer either of the sufferers or of their friends. In point of fact, He perceived the secret wish for relief no less distinctly than the most explicit and open appeal to his power of healing, for “He knew what was in man.” This knowledge of men’s intimate thoughts, whether of His enemies, or of His friends, or of those with whom He came in contact, Jesus evinced in a thousand ways, and He ever used it to the best advantage either of the surrounding multitudes or of those who were made aware that their innermost feelings did not escape His all-seeing eye. Finally, it is recorded that on three several occasions the lifeless remains of man felt the effect of His power over death, and these three great miracles were well calculated to convince all that He was indeed “the Resurrection and the Life.”

A third class of miracles has reference to the **spirit-world**, and in this connection Jesus exerting His miraculous power appeared as the Holy One of God who had come to destroy the empire of Satan. Despite all the theories advanced to disprove the reality of demoniacal possessions, it must be admitted that a careful study of the Gospel narrative proves that in this respect, the Evangelists and our Lord Himself shared and approved the belief of their contemporaries. For them, as for all those around them, demoniacal possessions were a form of disease distinguishable from all others, and expulsions of evil spirits were events of real and frequent occurrence.

The last subject of our Lord's miracles we wish to mention here, consists in the **future events** which He distinctly foretold. He spoke with the confidence of one who is perfectly acquainted with the future respecting His own person, His church, His disciples, His enemies, Jerusalem, and other cities of His country, etc., and we all know with what absolute accuracy His predictions have been fulfilled.

### 3. Chief Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles.

One of the leading characteristics of the miracles recorded in the Gospels is their appropriateness as proofs of our Lord's Divine mission and character. Not only they were actions making exception to all the laws of nature, they were also the very deeds which the prophets of old (Isai. xlii, 1, sq.) had led our Lord's contemporaries (John vii, 31) to regard as the credentials of the future Messiah. Performed in the full blaze of the midday sun, in the streets, in the public places, in the presence of immense crowds, they appealed powerfully to the imagination of the people at large, and to the reason of thoughtful observers. No wonder then that Jesus repeatedly pointed to His miracles as clear signs of His Divine mission and character, and that unbiased men, whatever their rank in society, feeling that these were not the deeds of one leagued with Beelzebub, as the Jewish leaders affirmed, were led to recognize Jesus as a prophet, as the Son of David and the expected Messiah.

A second and no less striking characteristic of our Lord's miracles, is the perfect mastery over all things which they evince. As stated above, the subject of His miracles is co-extensive with all creation: all the elements of nature, all the diseases of the body, however inveterate, death itself and the powers of hell, are subject to His command; men's most intimate thoughts do not escape His notice, and the future has no obscurity for His mental vision. He, indeed, moves in this world as the supreme Master of all things. Unlike

the prophets of old, and the holy servants of God through ages, He performs miracles in His own Name, with the greatest ease, and as men are wont to do their simplest actions. He has only to will, to say the word, and the effects, however astonishing, come to pass; and as His is not simply a delegated power, He can impart it to whomsoever He wills, and thereby cause His numerous messengers to perform similar wonders in His Name.

Intimately connected with this perfect mastery over all things, is the marvellous simplicity with which it was exercised. Examine the Gospel miracles one after another, and you will find none performed as a mere display of power. They all arose naturally out of their occasions, they all served a useful purpose in connection with our Lord's personal mission, and neither before nor after their performance can the least trace of ostentation or self-satisfaction be discovered on the part of Jesus. Viewed from this standpoint, our Lord's miracles offer the most striking contrast with the puerile, extravagant, grotesque, not to say absurd, character of the miracles ascribed to Him in the Apocryphal Gospels: <sup>1</sup> the former are manifest proofs of Divine wisdom, the latter are but the play of human fancy.

But the miracles of Jesus appear much more deeds of His merciful love and tender compassion than works of His wisdom and power. As has been beautifully said by a contemporary writer, "This power which He wielded so royally, which He held back so mightily, so that no provocation, no danger, no treason, no contempt, could induce Him to use it in His own defence, seemed to escape from His control when there was question of doing good to others. Let Him meet the poor, or the sick, and swift as lightning this Divine power escaped from His heart in acts of Love. Sometimes it would almost seem as though He were no longer the

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. the Gospel of James, chaps. xviii, xxii, xxiv; the Gospel of Thomas, chaps. ii, iv, v; the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, chaps. xxvi, xxix; the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, chaps. xxxviii, xxxix, xl.

Master of it, as in the incomparable history of the poor woman who approached Him humbly from behind, saying, 'If I can but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be cured.' On certain occasions He even gave way to tears, and groanings, and unwonted trouble, which bore witness to the intensity of His love. Who does not recall the impulse of mercy which touched Him at Naim, by the side of the bier of the only son, and the sorrowing mother. . . . How shall we forget the unwonted agitation which He manifested at the tomb of Lazarus!"<sup>2</sup> Almost all the miracles of Jesus were prompted by His compassion for the needs of others, and this is why St. Peter, reminding his hearers of what had been the most constant and the most salient feature of our Lord's public life, said that Jesus "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts x, 38).

A last characteristic to be mentioned here in connection with our Lord's miracles consists in this, they were never wrought for self. Search the Gospels, and you will find that whilst Jesus multiplies His miracles in behalf of others, He acts towards Himself as if He were absolutely powerless to supply His own wants in a miraculous manner. Rather than to resort to His power of performing miracles, He prefers to suffer hunger and thirst, to be absolutely destitute of the things of this world, to flee from His enemies as long as His own hour has not come, and then to be arrested, tried and sentenced to the most ignominious and cruel death of the Cross. Indeed, no clearer proof could be given than all this He voluntarily endured, and that during His entire mortal life He was the Divine Victim sent to atone for the sins of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. **Bougand** (transl. C. L. Currie), *An Argument for the Divinity of Jesus Christ*, pp. 54, 55.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE LAST DAYS OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

#### § 1. FINAL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

**1. From Ephrem to Jericho.** After a seclusion of several weeks, our Lord left Ephrem and started on His final journey to Jerusalem. As He intended soon to make His triumphal entry into the Holy City at the head of countless multitudes, He so directed His steps as to meet the caravans which from the north and from the east were already moving towards Jerusalem on the approach of the Paschal celebration. Accordingly, He went northward through Samaria, and next eastward on the border-land<sup>1</sup> between that province and Galilee, to meet in the plain of the Jordan the Galilean caravans. Then He crossed the Jordan and kept along the river-banks where He was joined by the Jewish caravans coming from the east, and together with them He recrossed the Jordan at a ford nearly opposite Jericho (Luke xvii, 11; Matt. xix, 1; Mark x, 1).<sup>2</sup>

Scarcely had Jesus re-entered into public life, when the Pharisees reappeared, pursuing Him. With mockery they inquired of Him when all His preparatory preaching of the Messianic kingdom would be at an end, and the new kingdom begin. Our Lord's answer was a complete condemnation of the manner in which His enemies thought the Mes-

<sup>1</sup> On this border-line occurred the healing of the ten lepers recorded in St. Luke, xvii, 12-19.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Fouard, vol. ii, p. 131, footnote 1.

sianic kingdom should appear. He affirmed in opposition to their views that no great external signs would usher it in, and that no magnificent court would surround the new King, so that no throng attracted by His apparel could say: "He is here! He is here!" Indeed, the kingdom they still expected had already begun in their midst, and they were not aware of the fact (Luke xvii, 20, 21). However humbling for their pride our Lord's condemnation of their Messianic views may have appeared in the eyes of the Pharisees, His words in another circumstance were still more calculated to wound their sensibilities. It was when in the hearing of all, He delivered the parable of **the Pharisee and the Publican**, which contains so strong a rebuke of Pharisaic self-righteousness (Luke xviii, 9-14). It is not therefore to be wondered at, that to avenge themselves on Jesus, the Pharisees strove a little later to entrap Him by their question about divorce: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?" In His answer, our Lord took what clearly was an unassailable position; since God had Himself established the perfect unity of the marriage-bond, no man could lawfully break it asunder. Nevertheless, the Pharisees objected that this answer of Jesus involved Him in a direct contradiction with their great lawgiver, Moses, who had enacted regulations about divorce. Of course, there was not the least ground for this supposed contradiction; this Jesus easily proved to the shame of His adversaries, and He then declared the Mosaic allowance abrogated, and prescribed for the bond of matrimony an absolute sacredness (Matt. xix, 1-9; Mark x, 1-9).

Meantime, our Lord was actively engaged in training His disciples for their Apostolic mission and for His near departure from them. Among the special instructions He gave them during this period, we may notice in particular His teachings about celibacy, as about a special calling in life higher in its nature than that of matrimony (Matt. xix, 10-12). His main

efforts, however, were plainly directed towards preparing their minds and feelings for His coming Passion and Death. Often He spoke to them of His future sufferings (Luke xvii, 25 ; xviii, 31) ; and once, at least, whilst going before them, His general manner was such that it caused them to fear that some great calamity was near at hand (Mark x, 32). Yet, their preconceived notions about the victories of the Messiah over the enemies of the Jews, and about His glorious earthly rule, prevented them from realizing the plain import of our Lord's words (Luke xviii, 34). In fact, as the various troops of the pilgrims fell in with the crowds which already surrounded Jesus, and as they greeted Him with enthusiasm, the apostles shared the common belief that at length their Master would very soon begin His glorious rule (Luke xix, 11). This explains to us how, a few hours only after one of His most explicit predictions of the ignominious treatment He was to suffer at the hands of the Gentiles, two disciples of Jesus, James and John — probably instigated by Salome, their mother — laid an open claim on the highest honors of our Lord's kingdom. The jealousy of the other apostles was at once aroused by this ambitious request of the two brothers, and our Lord profited by this new outburst of their love of superiority and power, to teach them a lesson most important for themselves and for their successors in the holy ministry. He plainly told them that, however it might be among the rulers and leading men of the world, greatness among them was to be attained only by the humble and faithful discharge of their arduous mission, "as the Son of Man also," He added, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many" (Mark x, 35-45).

**2. Through Jericho** (Matt. xx, 29-34 ; Mark x, 46-52 ; Luke xviii, 35 ; xix, 28). Having crossed the Jordan, Jesus soon arrived at Jericho, an important town five or six miles west



of the Jordan and between fifteen and twenty miles northeast of Jerusalem. In connection with this town, the Synoptists agree in recording a miracle of healing as performed by our Lord at its gate,<sup>1</sup> but they seem to be at variance on the two following points: (1) whilst St. Matthew states that *two* blind men received their sight from Jesus, St. Mark and St. Luke speak only of *one* man; (2) St. Matthew and St. Mark affirm that the miracle was performed on Christ's departure *from* Jericho; St. Luke says, on the contrary, that it occurred when "*He drew nigh*" that city.

Struck with the difficulty of harmonizing the three narratives, several writers, among whom is numbered the Catholic Dr. Schegg, think that to account for these differences we must admit that they existed already in the sources from which each Evangelist drew his information; furthermore, these same writers remark that the discrepancies thus admitted being evidently of a slight nature, they do not at all affect the principal fact, that a miracle of healing was performed at Jericho. A probable account for these differences, may, however, be given without resorting to that supposition which goes against the common teaching of Catholic theology respecting the historical accuracy required by the inspired character of our canonical Gospels. It may be admitted, for instance, that whilst *two* blind men were actually healed, as recorded by St. Matthew, only *one* of them, because more prominent, is spoken of by St. Mark and St. Luke. It may also be admitted that since at that time, there were apparently two distinct towns bearing the name of Jericho and about a half-hour distant from each other, the blind men may have been healed about half-way between the two towns; this supposition would of course allow St. Matthew and St. Mark to speak of the miracle as having occurred when Jesus "*went out*" of one Jericho, whilst St. Luke could as well de-

<sup>1</sup> The three narratives resemble one another so closely that it is difficult not to admit with Maldonatus and other commentators, that the Evangelists describe but one and the same event (cfr. **Maldonatus**, in Matt. xx, 30).



scribe the same event as having occurred when our Lord "*drew nigh*" to the other Jericho.<sup>1</sup>

However this may be, it was certainly at but a few miles from Jerusalem, that Jesus accepted again the Messianic title of "Son of David," publicly given Him by the blind men of Jericho, and that in imparting to them the special blessing they asked for, He proved Himself to be the Messiah predicted by the prophets of old (cfr. Isai. xlii, 1-7). It is true that in the eyes of many, His conduct towards Zacheus, the despised chief of the publicans of Jericho, appeared at first unworthy of one claiming to be the holy King and mighty deliverer of the Jews; yet, when they noticed the conversion of Zacheus and heard our Lord's assertion that He had come to reclaim the lost **sons of Abraham**, they were satisfied that Jesus had acted in a manner worthy of the Messiah whom they expected. Nay more, their hopes about Him ran so high under the circumstances of the time, that "they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately be manifested." It was to counteract these wild expectations of His immediate enthronement in Jerusalem, that before leaving Jericho, our Lord delivered the significant parable of **the Pounds**, wherein He suggested that He must first take His departure from the midst of His own people, and that only on His glorious return He would treat both friends and foes according to their deserts.

3. **At Bethany** (Matt. xxvi, 6-13; Mark xiv, 3-9; John xi, 55-xii, 11). Whilst the pilgrims who had already reached Jerusalem, debated among themselves whether Jesus would come for the Paschal festival, our Lord left Jericho and proceeded towards the Holy City. On the sixth day "before the Pasch" He arrived in Bethany, and repaired to the house of Martha and Mary, which He intended to make His home

<sup>1</sup> See **Fouard**, vol. ii, pp. 151, 152. For other methods of reconciliation cfr. **Knabebauer**, in St. Matthew; **Andrews**, pp. 417, 418.

during the last week of His mortal life. At the end of the next day (probably Saturday, April 1, A.D. 30), a supper was prepared for Him and for His disciples. Lazarus was there, and Martha served. As they were at table, Mary came behind the couch on which Jesus reclined and poured on His sacred head and feet a most precious ointment, the sweet odor of which filled the house. This costly offering,<sup>1</sup> prompted by her love, greatly displeased the avaricious Judas, who openly murmured against it as a waste, and whose view about the matter was shared by some other disciples. But our Savior highly praised the action of Mary, seeing in it a loving homage especially connected with His approaching death and burial.

Meanwhile, the news of our Lord's arrival at Bethany had spread through the Holy City, and a great multitude of Jews hearing it went to Bethany to see Him, and also Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. Whereupon, the chief priests who had already decided upon the death of Jesus, "took it into serious consideration whether Lazarus also should not be put to death, because as long as he should live, he would be the means of inducing many to believe in Him who had restored him to life" (*Ware, The Life of the Savior*, p. 186).

<sup>1</sup> Its money value was about \$50, or about as much as the whole year's wage of a day-laborer in our Lord's time.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE LAST DAYS OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

#### § 2. BEGINNING OF PASSION WEEK (APRIL 2-5, A. D. 30).

1. **Palm Sunday** (Matt. xxi, 1-17; Mark xi, 1-11; Luke xix, 29-44; John xii, 12-19). On the first day of the week of His Passion — known as Palm Sunday — Jesus left Bethany about midday to effect His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Attended by His disciples and other pilgrims, He probably followed the usual road for horsemen and caravans, and which is the southernmost of the three roads connecting Bethany with the Holy City. Soon **Bethphage** was in view, and according to His directions, two of our Lord's disciples brought to Him an ass and a colt, whereon, as predicted by Zachary (Chap. ix, 9), Jesus wished to make His Messianic entry into Jerusalem. This appeared to some of His disciples the signal that He would at length assume the rank and title which they believed to be His, and placing their outer garments on the yet unbroken colt, as a kind of saddle, they set Jesus thereon, and accompanied Him with joyful acclamations.

Thus they moved on towards Jerusalem, Lazarus and the apostles near Jesus, and a great multitude following Him. This multitude shared in the enthusiasm of our Lord's disciples, and in their joyful transports, strewed their outer garments and palm branches in the way of our Divine Savior. Many of them had been witnesses of the raising of Lazarus,

and they proclaimed, as they advanced, this wonderful deed of Jesus (John xii, 17).

When the long and triumphant procession reached the point of the road where first begins "the descent of Mount Olivet" (Luke xix, 37), the multitudes caught the first view of the Jewish capital, and this sight drew from them shouts of triumph: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!" It was indeed as a king that on that glorious day Jesus presented Himself to the Holy City and to its rulers. But the future was not hidden from His eyes, as indeed it was from the eyes of all those who surrounded Him, and hence, when a short while after the multitudes had begun their hymns of triumph, the road allowed our Savior to contemplate the whole city in all its splendor, He wept over it, and described the awful fate which awaited it and its inhabitants.

Probably as they descended the Mount of Olives, crowds from Jerusalem and its neighborhood met them, attracted by the shouts of our Lord's followers. They, too, were bearing branches of palm-trees, and turning round, they fell in with the procession and preceded Jesus, joyfully proclaiming Him the King of Israel.

St. Luke informs us that among this ever-growing multitude, there were Pharisees who would have had Jesus silence His partisans. They naturally felt powerless to silence themselves the enthusiastic crowds, and yet, they were afraid at the result of a popular uprising against Rome, which might very well follow the proclamation of a King utterly unable in their eyes to withstand the Roman legions. Jesus had just spoken of the future ruin of Jerusalem, why then did He allow His followers to proclaim Him King of Israel in the very hearing of the Roman procurator and of his soldiers garrisoned in the fortress Antonia? Instead of rebuking His disciples as requested by the Pharisees, our Lord

declared that this public proclamation of His Messianic dignity was so entirely conform to the Divine designs, that "if these should hold their peace, the stones would cry out."

When the triumphant procession entered Jerusalem, the whole city was moved; and the Pharisees in their impotent rage were reduced to say among themselves: "Do you see that we prevail nothing? behold the whole world is gone after Him!" whilst the Savior of the world was led to the House of His Father. There the procession dispersed, the Jewish customs not allowing the pilgrims to come near to the sanctuary in travelling clothes and with dusty feet.

It was late, and our Lord simply visited the Temple, "viewing all things round about," as if He would observe whether all was done according to His Father's will, and then He returned to Bethany with the Twelve to spend the night (Mark xi, 11).

2. **Monday** (Matt. xxi, 12-22; Mark xi, 12-26; Luke xix, 45-48). The next morning our Lord returned to Jerusalem, and on his way thither, He saw at a distance by the way-side a fig-tree which had an appearance of bearing fruit. He went to it, but finding nothing but leaves, He doomed the tree to perpetual barrenness in the hearing of His disciples.<sup>1</sup> In this action of our Lord we cannot help recognizing a symbol of the decay to which Israel was henceforth and forever doomed, because Jesus had found in the Jewish nation nothing but the appearances of righteousness.

Entering the city, He went to the Temple, the desecration of which He had noticed the evening before. The old abuses against which He had energetically protested at the beginning of His public life had crept in again, nay more, they were apparently greater than at the time of the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus. He therefore cleansed a second

<sup>1</sup> For further details in connection with this cursing of the fig-tree, see **Fouard**, vol. ii, pp. 171, 172; **Trench**, On Miracles; **Fillion**, St. Marc, p. 162.

time the House of His Father, and then He proceeded to exercise in its purified courts His public ministry of teaching and healing. His doctrine caused the admiration of the whole multitude around Him, and His wonderful deeds of healing moved the children, who may have been members of the choir of singers employed in the Temple, to re-echo the joyful *Hosannas* of the preceding day. The chief priests and Scribes in their displeasure demanded that He should put a stop to these acclamations, but in face of His popularity they did not feel able to proceed farther with their murderous designs. At evening our Lord returned to Bethany.

3. **Tuesday** (Matt. xxi, 20-xxv, 46; Mark xi, 20-xiii, 37; Luke xx, 1-xxi, 38; John xii, 20-50). The next day our Lord appeared again in the Temple, where He was soon met by an official deputation from the Sanhedrim. These deputies inquired of Jesus the *nature* and *origin* of His mission, pretending thereby that they were competent judges of His claims to a Divine mission. But our Lord showed clearly to them, that if—as they affirmed themselves—they were not able to decide whether the baptism administered by John was of heaven or not, He had a perfect right not to consider them competent judges of the character and origin of His own mission. Then He proceeded to tell them in parables, whose meaning they could not help realizing, that since they had rejected all the Divine warnings, they in turn would be rejected, together with their capital and nation, to give place to a new Theocratic people yielding fruits worthy of God's kingdom.

Never had the words of Jesus been calculated to wound more deeply the personal and national pride of the different sections of the Sanhedrim that had been deputed to Him, and this is why *Pharisees*, *Sadducees* and *Scribes* attempted in turn to ensnare Him by their captious questions. To the Pharisees who asked Him whether it was lawful to give trib-

ute to Cæsar, our Lord answered that they could not have accepted the coins of the emperor without recognizing his sovereignty and thereby declaring it lawful to pay him tribute. The question put to Jesus by the Sadducees betrayed their denial of a future life, and was apparently based on a principle of the Mosaic Law which required that in the event of a man dying without issue, his brother should marry his wife and raise him up issue. As a consequence of this principle, they said, one woman had been in turn the wife of seven brothers; they therefore wished to know "whose wife of the seven shall she be in the resurrection; for they all had her?" Our Lord pointed out to them that their difficulty had no other basis than their ignorance (1) of the infinite power of God able to preserve in existence His future kingdom without the use of marriage; (2) of the exact teaching of the Mosaic Law which, as Jesus proved, implicitly contained the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

This direct and precise answer of Jesus to one of the standing difficulties of the time, against the popular belief of a future resurrection, caused the greatest admiration among the multitudes, and it should have convinced our Lord's enemies of the utter uselessness of their efforts to ensnare Him. Nevertheless, one of the Scribes was deputed to ask Him "Which is the great commandment in the law?" and he received an answer the wisdom of which he acknowledged with genuine admiration.

But our Lord had been long enough upon the defensive, He therefore proceeded to test the knowledge of his adversaries by one single question. He inquired of them, how the Messiah could be the son of David, and yet be called "Lord" by David himself, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This was a topic about which the leaders of the Jews should apparently have had a ready and distinct answer, yet "no man was able to answer Him a word," and this is why "no man durst from that day forth ask Him any



more questions." In consequence of this avowed ignorance of the Sanhedrists, our Lord felt fully justified in the eyes of all to denounce the blindness and pride of His deadly enemies, and then He gave vent to the tender feelings of His compassionate heart about the coming ruin of Jerusalem and its Temple, hurried on by the guilty leaders of the Jewish nation.

A much brighter vision, however, opened up before His eyes, when He was told that certain Gentiles who had come to worship in Jerusalem wished to see Him, for in this significant event He contemplated the future conversion of the Gentile world.

As our Lord left the Temple, He foretold again its utter destruction, and this led some of His disciples to inquire "privately" about the *time* and *signs* of this awful calamity. It is probably when seated on the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple, that Jesus uttered His last prophecies concerning the ruin of the Holy City and the end of the world, and that in this connection He delivered the parables of the **Ten Virgins** and of the **Talents** to impress upon the minds of His hearers the constant duty of watchfulness and faithfulness. To this He added a description of the last judgment, and He concluded by a prediction of the *occasion*, the *manner* and the *very day* of His sufferings and death.

Whilst our Savior was thus foretelling His disciples that He was to suffer and to be crucified during the Paschal festival, the chief priests and ancients of the people in a meeting at the palace of Caiphas, had resolved not to arrest Him during the feast for fear of the multitudes. But our Lord's prediction was fulfilled in a way His enemies were far from anticipating. Judas, one of the Twelve, perhaps come to present to the priests the Paschal lamb he had just bought, having learned the object of this meeting, was introduced to them and offered for money, to betray Jesus secretly into their hands. Great indeed was the joy of the leaders of Israel at this unexpected offer, and they covenanted to give



Judas thirty pieces of silver (about \$18.70), whilst he, on his part, agreed to watch for a favorable opportunity to betray his Master to them.

Our Lord's public ministry closes with Holy Tuesday (April 4th), for He does not seem to have returned to Jerusalem the following day, which He probably spent in seclusion at Bethany.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE LAST PASCH CELEBRATED BY OUR LORD.

#### § 1. PREPARATIONS FOR THE PASCHAL MEAL.

1. **By Whom and in What Place Made?** Leaving aside the traitor Judas — ordinarily in charge of the expenses — our Lord selected Peter and John to make the necessary preparations for the Paschal supper. He bade them go to the Holy City and enter a house which He pointed out to them only in general, though sufficient, terms, for He did not wish to indicate this house or its owner in a clearer manner in the hearing of His betrayer. They were to ask the owner of this house for a very humble apartment, but as Jesus predicted, he would place at their disposal an *upper room*, that is the most honorable place of his house, and which he had already furnished and made ready in view of the Paschal celebration.<sup>1</sup> It was, then, to this upper room that Peter and John had to carry the lamb after they had slain it in the Temple, and to bring the unleavened cakes, bitter herbs, wine, etc., required for the Paschal supper (Luke xxii, 7-13; Matt. xxvi, 17-19; Mark xiv, 12-16).

2. **On What Day** was this Last Pasch prepared? The answer to this question depends on the day we must admit for the last supper of our Lord, for it is beyond doubt that Jesus ate His last supper on the evening of the day on

<sup>1</sup> In the present day, a minaret rises above the *Cœnaculum* or hall pointed out by tradition as the Upper Room used by our Lord for His last Supper. The hall is some fifty feet in length by thirty in width.

which it was prepared by St. Peter and St. John. Now, if we consult the Evangelists, we shall find that there is apparently a contradiction between the Synoptists and St. John, concerning the day on which our Lord ate His last supper. The former state plainly (Matt. xxvi, 17 ; Mark xiv, 12 ; Luke xxii, 7) that our Lord's last supper took place on the legal day for the celebration of the Pasch (Thursday, Nisan 14th, April 6th) ; the latter, on the contrary, seems to say that this last supper occurred one day before the "*Pasch*" was celebrated by the Jews (cfr. John xviii, 28 ; xix, 14), and consequently that the legal day for the Paschal celebration was only Friday evening, April 7th. A careful study of the Sacred Text in the light of Jewish customs, however, makes it very probable that in the passages of St. John which seem contradictory to the statements of the first three Gospels, the beloved disciple uses the word "**Pasch**," not of the Paschal lamb to be eaten on Nisan 14th, as the first three Evangelists do, but of the **Chagigah** or festive offering made on the 15th of Nisan.<sup>1</sup> Bearing this twofold meaning in mind, it can easily be shown that St. John agrees with the Synoptists in placing our Lord's last supper on Nisan 14th, Thursday, April 6th ; so that the preparations for this last supper must have been made in the afternoon of the same day.

## § 2. THE LAST SUPPER.

1. **The Jewish Paschal Meal in the Time of our Lord.** The last Paschal supper which Jesus had longed so ardently to celebrate with His disciples (Luke xxii, 15), was probably conducted as follows by His Jewish contemporaries : The party, varying in number between ten and twenty persons, met in the evening and reclined on couches disposed along three sides of a low, Eastern table. The supper opened with a cup of wine mingled with water, which the master of

<sup>1</sup> For a careful and thorough study of this intricate question, see **Andrews**, pp. 452-481; and article **Cène** in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, edited by **Fr. Vigouroux**.

the household or the person who presided had prepared and blessed, and of which all present partook. Thereupon, all washed their hands, another blessing being at the same time pronounced. The different dishes of the feast, the lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the thick sauce (called the **Charoseth**) were next placed on the table, and the president dipping some of the bitter herbs into the Charoseth, ate of them and gave to others. Then the president explained the meaning of the festival, and the whole party sharing in his gratitude to Jehovah sang the first part of the **Hallel**,<sup>1</sup> that is Psalm cxiii and part of Psalm cxiv, after which prayer was offered and the second cup drunk.

The president washes his hands for the second time, breaks one of the cakes of unleavened bread, blesses it, and all partake of it, dipping the portions of it with the bitter herbs into the Charoseth. The flesh of the lamb was now eaten, and another blessing pronounced, when the third cup, or **Cup of Blessing**, was handed round. This was succeeded by the fourth, called the **Cup of Hallel**, because the second part of the **Hallel** (Psalm cxiv, second part, Psalms cxv-cxvii) was now sung and this concluded the supper.

With these details before our minds, we can easily understand several particulars of our Lord's last Paschal supper as recorded in the Sacred narrative.

**2. Particulars of our Lord's Last Supper.** It was probably in taking their places on the couches around the table that the contention as to rank arose among the disciples. They wished, following in this the custom of the Pharisees of the time, to recline at this important meal according to their rank, and this contest for precedence drew from our Lord's lips a well-deserved rebuke (Luke xxii, 24-30). The contest once over, St. John occupied the place on

<sup>1</sup> The **Hallel** (praise) is the name given to a series of Psalms having for title the Hebrew word **Halleluia** (praise Jehovah).

our Lord's right, so that his head could easily repose on the bosom of Jesus; St. Peter, stung by his Master's rebuke, had probably rushed with his ordinary impetuosity to take the lowest place at the other end of the table, opposite St. John, to whom he could therefore easily beckon to ask who the traitor was (John xiii, 23-25); finally, Judas occupied very likely the place immediately on our Lord's left, as is suggested by several particulars of the Gospel narrative (Matt. xxvi, 23, 25; John xiii, 26-28).<sup>1</sup>

The disciples having reclined at table, Jesus, as the head of the party, "took the chalice, gave thanks and said: 'Take and divide it among you'" (Luke xxii, 17). This was the *first cup* of the Jewish Paschal supper, and when it had passed round, the next ceremony was the *washing of hands* which St. John probably records as transformed by his Divine Master into the *washing of feet*. For this menial office, usually performed by slaves, Jesus left aside His garments, poured water into the basin, placed as usual at the end of the table, and came first to Peter the nearest of all, and over whose resistance He finally prevailed. He washed successively the feet of all, not without, however, making a covered allusion to the betrayal of Judas: "You are clean, but not all" (John xiii, 10). Then our Lord resumed His garments, took His place again at table, and as the Jewish meal was going on, He explained to His disciples the meaning of so mysterious a proceeding: He had given them an example of humility which they should imitate so as to secure to themselves eternal bliss (John xiii, 1-17).

One of them, however, would be by his own fault excluded from the promised reward, and this is why Jesus added "I speak not of you all," and He then referred to the prediction made long centuries before that He would be betrayed by one of His disciples (John xiii, 18-20). But the apostles did not heed this new reference to the betrayal, probably because of their joy whilst singing the first part of the **Hallel**

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. **Edersheim**, *Life of Jesus*, vol. ii, p. 494, sq.

and drinking the *second cup*. But our Savior was far from rejoicing; indeed "He was troubled in spirit," and when He made a new and more explicit reference to the betrayer, "Amen, Amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray Me," all the disciples remained at first amazed, and next asked "Lord, is it I?" (Matt. xxvi, 21, 22; Mark xiv, 18-21; Luke xxii, 21-23; John xiii, 21-22). Our Lord's answer left still the special person undetermined, but He added an awful woe against the betrayer. Judas, in his turn, repeated, "Is it I?" and Jesus gave him an affirmative answer which the traitor alone could hear because of his nearness to our Lord (Matt. xxvi, 23-25; Mark xiv, 20, 21). Unable to discover otherwise who was to betray his Master, St. Peter beckoned to the beloved disciple, who then changing a little his posture leaned back on the sacred bosom of Jesus, asking Him who was to be the betrayer, and received as a sign the giving of *the sop* which probably followed *the second cup*. This sop consisted of a morsel of the Paschal lamb, together with a piece of unleavened bread and some bitter herbs, and it was first handed to Judas by our Lord, Who then added "That which thou dost, do quickly." Judas "went out immediately," for as he had eaten the Pasch, he could now leave for business purposes or for giving alms to the poor, so that "no man at table knew" the reason of his departure. The precise time at which Judas left the upper room has ever been a matter of discussion in the Church, yet it seems very probable that he went out *before* our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist.<sup>1</sup>

The departure of Judas was manifestly a great relief for the sacred heart of Jesus (John xiii, 31, 32), and He soon proceeded to give to His faithful disciples the supreme pledge of His love, by the **Institution of the Holy Eucharist** (cfr. Matt. xxvi, 26-29; Mark xiv, 22-25; Luke xxii, 19, 20). The eating of the flesh of the lamb was now completed, after which nothing more was to be eaten, but here our Lord an-

<sup>1</sup> This is the view admitted by such recent Catholic scholars as Dehaut, Fillion, Le Camus, Cornely, Trochon and Frette.

ticipated a later rite, that of breaking and eating bread after the Paschal supper.<sup>1</sup> He "took bread, and blessed and brake and gave to his disciples and said, Take ye, and eat: THIS IS MY BODY," and by these all-powerful words of the Son of God the bread was actually changed into the body of the Lord, into that very body which was soon to be crucified for man's salvation. Then "taking the chalice," the *third cup*, or "*Cup of Blessing*" as it is called by St. Paul (I Cor. x, 16), "He gave thanks and gave to them, saying: 'Drink ye all of this; for THIS IS MY BLOOD of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you.'" By virtue of the same Divine power, these words of Jesus changed the wine of the chalice into His most precious blood soon to be shed on Calvary for our redemption. Nor was this mysterious transformation of bread into the Lord's body, of wine into His blood, to take place only once, for He entrusted the power to effect it to His apostles and to their successors in the priestly office: "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

3. **After the Last Supper.** Our Lord's last supper was practically over; yet He remained at table a little longer time, during which He imparted to His disciples His first consolatory words (John xiii, 33-35), then predicted to Peter his threefold denial (John xiii, 36-38; Luke xxii, 31-38), and addressed again words of comfort to His apostles (John xiv). Then rising from the supper table, He said the **Hymn**—probably the second part of the **Hallel**—(cfr. Matt. xxvi, 30; Mark xiv, 26), and delivered the beautiful discourse recorded in Chapters xv and xvi of the fourth Gospel. This long discourse Jesus closed with a prayer which He addressed to His Father, and in which He spoke as the great High Priest of the New Law (John xvii).

After these words, Jesus went forth from the supper room with His disciples (John xviii, 1).

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. **Edersheim**, vol. ii, p. 511.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### OUR LORD'S TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES.

§ 1. THE ARREST OF JESUS (MATT. XXVI, 57-XXVII, 1; MARK XIV, 26-XV, 1; LUKE XXVI, 39-54; JOHN XVIII, 1-13).

1. **Time and Place.** It was probably between ten or eleven at night when Jesus, leaving the Cœnaculum, went with His disciples towards **Gethsemani**, an olive orchard east of Jerusalem. On His way thither, His main concern was to prepare His apostles for what was now at hand. He wished to inspire them with feelings of self-distrust, and hence He predicted to all their common desertion, whilst to Peter, the loudest in his protestations of fidelity, He foretold again his threefold denial.

Meanwhile they crossed the deep ravine of the Cedron, and they soon reached the garden of Gethsemani, not far distant from, if not identical with, the present enclosed space pointed out by tradition as the scene of our Lord's agony.<sup>1</sup> This garden was well known to Judas, for it was a place to which Jesus often resorted to pray. On this night, His prayer long remained unanswered, and meantime His soul was sorrowful unto death, His body covered with a sweat of blood, and His heart wounded by the insensibility of His three chosen disciples Peter, James and John. But at length, Jesus comforted by a heavenly messenger, lovingly accepted

<sup>1</sup> In the traditional garden of Gethsemani, there are eight venerable olive-trees which may have sprung from the old roots of those which cast their shadow upon our agonizing Savior



the chalice of His Passion, and bade His apostles be ready to face those who, at that very moment, were approaching the garden to arrest Him. As our Lord's walk from the Cœnaculum to Gethsemani together with His prayer and agony in the garden took probably more than one hour (Matt. xxvi, 40; Mark xiv, 37), His arrest is most likely to be placed about midnight.

**2. Actors and Incidents.** The chief actor in the arrest was one of the Twelve, the traitor Judas. This night during which all were busily engaged at the Paschal meal, had appeared to him the most favorable time to betray his Master, and hence it was probably understood between him and our Lord's enemies (cfr. John xiii, 27) that he should leave the Paschal table immediately after he had eaten the Pasch, and lead without delay those in charge of the arrest, to the exact place where Jesus was reclining with His disciples. It is in this way that Judas became "the leader of them that apprehended Jesus" (Acts i, 16), that is of "a multitude" made up (1) of soldiers and servants from the chief priests and ancients of the people; (2) of a part of the Roman cohort under one of its captains, in case a disturbance should arise; (3) of chief priests and ancients to direct the proceedings. Thus accompanied, the betrayer went first to the upper room, but finding it empty, he went next to the garden of Gethsemani, where he suspected his Master might still be in prayer.

Judas had calculated aright, and upon his arrival at the other side of the Cedron, he soon found Jesus, who, with the eleven apostles, had come forth from the garden to meet His betrayer. According to an arrangement, calculated, it was thought, not to cause any suspicion among our Lord's followers, Judas left those who accompanied him a little behind,<sup>1</sup> and "coming forward" saluted Jesus with the usual saluta-

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, p. 503.

tion to which he added the kiss of peace. Scarcely had our Savior received this sign of friendship, now transformed by Judas into an act of treachery, when He went toward the multitude and asked them "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth" they replied, to which our Lord answered "I AM HE." At these simple words of Jesus, they went backward and fell to the ground, the Son of God proving thereby that had He so willed, no power on earth would have been able to arrest Him.

But as our Lord's second question and reply to the multitude, together with His request that they should allow His followers to escape unmolested, implied His willing surrender of Himself, they proceeded to seize Him. At this moment, Peter drawing his sword intervened and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. But our Lord rebuked him, healed the ear of Malchus, and affirmed explicitly His resolve not to defend Himself, protesting, however, against the unworthy conduct of the Jewish leaders He then noticed among the crowd. Jesus was then seized and bound, whilst in the midst of the confusion His disciples took to flight.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2. THE TRIAL OF JESUS (MATT. XXVI, 57-XXVII, 1; MARK XIV, 53-XV, 1; LUKE XXII, 54-65; JOHN XVIII, 13-27).

1. **The Preliminary Examination.** From Gethsemani, Jesus was led first to Annas one of the most influential men of the time,<sup>2</sup> and whose house was probably nearer the place of the arrest than that of Caiphas his son-in-law and the actual incumbent in the high priesthood. Furthermore, Annas having been the official high priest during about eight years, had only been deposed by the representative of a foreign and heathen power, the Roman procurator, Valerius

<sup>1</sup> As to the incident recorded in St. Mark (xiv, 51, 52) regarding the young man who followed Jesus, "having a linen cloth cast about his naked body," see **Edersheim**, vol. ii, pp. 544, 545.

<sup>2</sup> **Josephus**, *Antiq. of the Jews*, book xx, chap. ix, 1.

Gratus, so that in the eyes of the Jews, he was still their lawful high priest, bearing the title and wielding the influence of his former office. It was only natural, therefore, that immediately on His arrest, Jesus should be brought to him, the more so because he would greatly rejoice at the success of the plot against our Lord. However this may be, we have no record in the Gospel of a trial to which Annas would have subjected Jesus, and we are simply told that he "sent Him bound, to Caiphas the high priest."

Soon the house of this official high priest of the Jews was reached, but as some interval must necessarily elapse before the members of the Sanhedrim could be assembled, Caiphas asked Jesus some questions about His disciples and His doctrine. This was but a preliminary examination, since "there was no formal accusation, no witnesses, no sentence pronounced."<sup>1</sup> In His answer our Lord reminded the high priest that as an accused person, He should not be expected to criminate Himself. At these words of Jesus, an officer of Caiphas, knowing that he would thereby please his master, smote the face of the Son of God for what he called an irreverent answer to the high priest; but our Lord patiently bore this outrage mercifully expostulating however with that man to open his eyes to the injustice and baseness of his action.

Meanwhile, Peter and John having recovered from their panic had followed their Master to the house of the high priest and had been introduced by the portress, and it is probably during our Lord's preliminary examination by Caiphas, that the first two denials of Peter occurred.<sup>2</sup>

**2. The First Session of the Sanhedrim.** At length — between two and three in the morning — the Sanhedrists met in a large room of the high priest's palace, and the result of

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, p. 510.

<sup>2</sup> For the difficulties connected with the denial of St. Peter, cfr. Fouard, vol. ii, p. 280, sq.; Andrews, p. 517, sq.

their first sitting was a sentence of death against our Lord, the illegality of which can easily be perceived. It is clear, for instance, that the most elementary forms of justice were not observed in the case of Jesus ; before His trial His death had been agreed upon by His judges (John xi, 47-53) ; at the trial, no one appeared for Him as advocate, no witnesses were called to testify in His favor, and when the witnesses against Him could not agree in their testimony, He Himself was put under oath and compelled by the high priest to criminate Himself ; again, the trial took place before sunrise in opposition to Jewish law, and the abuse both before and after the trial proves that our Lord's judges were in reality His cruel and implacable enemies. A further proof of the illegality of this sentence is found in the fact that it was pronounced although the charges brought against Jesus could not be proved by witnesses (cfr. Matt. xxvi, 59, sq.; Mark xiv, 55-59).

The time came during this iniquitous trial when the witnesses were so manifestly untrustworthy that our Lord declined to answer their various charges, and then it was that His declared enemy, the high priest Caiphas, resorted to a manœuvre apparently reserved for the emergency. He arose, put Jesus under oath, thereby obliging Him to speak, and bade Him declare whether He was "the Christ, the Son of the blessed God." Our Lord answered affirmatively, and then added a few words which implied a claim on His part to equality in power and dignity with Jehovah Himself.<sup>1</sup> In the eyes of the high priest and of the Sanhedrists present, the declaration of Jesus amounted to an open blasphemy, and this is why, dispensing with further witnesses, they at once pronounced the sentence "HE IS GUILTY OF DEATH!" Then the Sanhedrim suspended its session to meet again at daybreak.

It was during this first session of the Sanhedrim, or at its

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Fouard, vol. ii, pp. 278, 279.

close, that occurred the third denial of Peter, upon whom Jesus then cast a look of mercy and who, "going forth, wept bitterly." We must also mention here the awful scene of abuse to which our Divine Savior was subjected between the two meetings of the Sanhedrim, and the general features of which are recorded in the Synoptists (Matt. xxvii, 67, 68; Mark xiv, 65; Luke xxii, 63-65).

3. **The Second Session of the Sanhedrim.** In holding a second meeting at the earliest possible moment after sunrise,<sup>1</sup> the Sanhedrists wished to comply with one of the strict rules of the court forbidding capital trials at night. This second session was held like the first in the house of Caiphas (cfr. John xviii, 28) and lasted but a short time, for it was simply devoted to secure from the lips of Jesus a most explicit statement of His claim to the Divine nature and authority. Our Lord's judges began with a question about His Messiahship, to which He apparently refused to answer. But as He soon repeated the very words which in their first meeting the Sanhedrists had considered as implying a claim to equality in power and dignity with Jehovah, they asked Him with one accord, "ART THOU THEN THE SON OF GOD?"

Plainly all the circumstances of the case gave to this question of our Lord's judges but one meaning. They wanted Him to commit Himself to a formal declaration that He was no less truly God than Jehovah Himself Whom He claimed as His Father. This was their meaning and Jesus fully realized it; and this is why He answered by the rabbinical formula "YOU SAY THAT I AM," whereby He endorsed as His own affirmation the full intent of the question put to Him. By this formal declaration of our Lord, the Sanhedrists had fully reached their object. They, themselves, "had heard it from His own mouth" that He claimed to be equal to God, and

<sup>1</sup> The sun rises at Jerusalem, in the month of April, about 5 o'clock.

therefore the sentence of death already pronounced against Him, was at once ratified by the highest tribunal of the Jews.

Judas soon learned this issue of his Master's trial, and having returned the money to the chief priests and ancients he went and hung himself, despairing that his deliberate perfidy could be forgiven him (Matt. xxvii, 3, sq.).

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### OUR LORD'S TRIAL BEFORE THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

(GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 7, A. D. 30.)

1. **Jesus before Pilate** (Matt. xxvii, 1, 2, 11-14; Mark xv, 1-5; Luke xxiii, 1-6; John xviii, 28-38). There now remained for the Jewish rulers to obtain from Pilate the ratification of their sentence of death against Jesus, for without the approval of the Roman procurator, they had no power to carry out a capital sentence. But this approval they hoped easily to wrest from the weakness of Pilate, and in consequence, they hurriedly led our Lord to the fortress Antonia where, as is very probable, this Roman official now resided.

Arriving at the **Prætorium** — for so were called the headquarters of the procurator wherever he happened to be — the Sanhedrists refused to enter this heathen house, lest they should incur a legal defilement which would have prevented them from eating the **Chagigah**,<sup>1</sup> as they were expected to do on that very day, Nisan 15th. Pilate therefore came out to give them audience, and he at once demanded they should proffer grounds of accusation against their prisoner. The Jewish officials remonstrated in order that their sentence should be confirmed without inquiry into the matter, but Pilate stood firm and compelled them to bring forth definite charges of which he would feel bound to take

<sup>1</sup> See the able discussion of this point in **Edersheim**, vol. ii, pp. 566-568.



cognizance. "They therefore began to accuse Jesus, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King." These charges directly affected the Roman authority over Judæa, and hence Pilate, entering the Prætorium, began to inquire into them. As, however, they could be summed up in the charge of setting up a Kingdom in opposition to that of Cæsar, Pilate questioned Jesus about His title of King of the Jews. To this fair inquiry of His judge, our Lord answered that He was indeed a King, but that His Kingdom being not of this world could not clash with the Roman power. This reply of our Lord fully satisfied the susceptibility of the Roman officials and in consequence, Pilate going out with Jesus, declared to the Jews "I find no cause (that is, ground for condemnation) in Him."

Our Lord's enemies were little prepared for such a public and unhesitating acquittal of Jesus, and this made them all the more earnest in repeating their charges: "He stirreth up the people," said they, "teaching throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee to this place," and St. Mark adds: "and the chief priests accused Him in many things." Amidst this storm of accusations Jesus remained silent, and this perfect self-command on the part of his prisoner caused the astonishment of the procurator. As Pilate's ear had caught the name of Galilee among the clamors of the multitude as the province wherein Jesus had excited the people to revolt, this suggested to the Roman official an expedient to relieve himself from all responsibility in connection with our Lord. He therefore assured himself that the accused was a Galilean, and then he sent Him to Herod Antipas, now in the Holy City, as one to whose jurisdiction Jesus naturally belonged.

2. **Jesus before Herod** (Luke xxiii, 7-12). Accompanied by the Roman soldiery and by a delegation of the



Sanhedrim, Jesus left the Prætorium on Mount Moriah, crossed the bridge which spans the Tyropœon valley and soon reached the palace of Herod on Mount Sion. The Galilean ruler had long wished to see the prophet whose fame had reached his ears, and it was with a firm hope that our Lord would perform some miracle to secure his patronage, that he saw Jesus standing before his tribunal. This, however, Jesus refused to do; nay more, He even remained silent both to the numerous questions of Herod and to the vehement accusations of the chief priests and the Scribes. Herod was irritated, and in scorn of our Lord's claims, he arrayed Him in the white garment of a candidate to royalty, and sent Him back to Pilate.

This interchange of civilities restored the broken friendship between the Roman Procurator and the Galilean Tetrarch.

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 3. **Jesus before Pilate Again** (Matt. xxvii, 15-31; Mark xv, 6-20; Luke xxiii, 13-25; John xviii, 39-xix, 16). With our Lord's return to the Prætorium, Pilate felt that all the responsibility he had wished to shift upon Herod had come back to him. He was thoroughly convinced of the innocence of Jesus, and accordingly having called together "the chief priests and the magistrates and the people," he took his place on the judgment-seat, intending to proclaim our Lord's innocence and to end the trial. Through his weak policy, however, instead of authoritatively putting an end to the trial, he suggested a compromise calculated, as he thought, to satisfy all parties. It was customary at the Paschal festival to release any prisoner for whom the people had a special desire, and now Pilate proposed that since the charges against Jesus had appeared groundless to Herod and to him, he would simply have our Lord chastised and then released.

Pilate's policy was a lamentable failure. The priests, of course, could not be satisfied with anything but the capital

punishment of Jesus, and the people reminded of their right to the release of any prisoner they asked for, rejected the idea that the Roman procurator should limit their choice to Jesus. Pilate was thus led to allow the multitude to choose between our Lord and Barabbas, and to this he agreed the more readily because he felt sure that Jesus would be the object of their preference, since a few days before they had received Him with enthusiasm into Jerusalem.

Whilst the people deliberated about the prisoner they should choose, the procurator received from his wife a message to the effect that during the night she had been greatly troubled in a dream about the just man now standing before her husband's tribunal; she therefore advised him not to inflict upon Him the least punishment. This, of course, made Pilate more anxious to end the trial; but, to his great astonishment, he soon discovered that, following the perfidious suggestions of their leaders and their own national feelings in favor of one who like Barabbas had fought against the Roman yoke, the multitude had agreed upon asking for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of Jesus. In vain did the Roman procurator remonstrate with the people; the multitude persisted in choosing Barabbas and clamoring for our Lord's crucifixion.<sup>1</sup>

At last, Pilate yielded and ordered that Jesus should be scourged, this being the usual preliminary to crucifixion. The soldiers therefore stripped our Lord to the waist, tied Him to a low pillar that, bending over, he might better receive the blows of the leathern thong, often loaded with lead or iron. There is no doubt that this scourging of Jesus was of the severest kind; the soldiers could inflict any number of lashes, and their victim was of the hated Jewish race.

After this cruel scourging, another awful scene took place in the inner court of the Prætorium. There, before the

<sup>1</sup> The principal reasons which may be given to account for this great and rapid change in public feeling in regard to our Lord are well stated by **Andrews**, pp. 537, 538.

assembled cohort, the soldiery arrayed Jesus in purple, crowned Him with thorns, placed a reed in His right hand, and paid a derisive homage to Him as the King of the Jews, smiting at the same time His sacred head with the reed, and spitting upon His august face.

When Pilate beheld Jesus in His pitiable condition after these barbarous indignities, he was moved with compassion, and presented Him to the multitude, hoping that this sight would be sufficient to touch the hearts of all. In fact, in presence of such meekness and suffering, the people were touched, and only "the chief priests and their servants" cried again for our Lord's crucifixion. Pilate was angry at this implacable hatred of the Jewish rulers, and realizing that he had gained ground over the people's mind, resolved not to put Jesus to death. "Take Him you," said he, "and crucify Him: for I find no cause in Him."

It is at this juncture, that to regain their hold upon the multitude, the Jewish rulers charged publicly our Lord with the crime of blasphemy which must needs be punished with death. "We have a Law," they exclaimed, "and according to the Law, He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Hearing this, Pilate greatly feared, submitted our Lord to a new interrogation, and even took an open step towards His release. But the Roman procurator was no match for the crafty Sanhedrists. They now threaten him with the vengeance of Tiberius for releasing a man accused of treason against the emperor. Pilate, doubtless, remembered how in one of his former conflicts with the Jews, that emperor had pronounced against him (cfr. page 63), and he knew well how to the suspicious mind of Tiberius the simple accusation of indifference to his imperial interests would be equivalent to conviction. Trembling for his very life, Pilate now prepared to give the final sentence, not without, however, protesting of his own innocence by washing his hands before all; then he orders that Jesus be taken away and cru-

cified. As our Lord came forth, Pilate presented Him to the Jews as their King, and as such, the representative of the Jewish people rejected their Savior, declaring that they had no King but Cæsar.

The form of the final sentence is not given in the Gospel narratives; the usual form was "IBIS AD CRUCEM."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE CRUCIFIXION.

(MATT. XXVII, 31-66; MARK XV, 20-47; LUKE XXIII, 26-56; JOHN XIX, 16-42.)

#### § 1. ON THE WAY TO CALVARY.

1. **The Via Dolorosa.** The road followed by Jesus to reach the place of the crucifixion is commonly called the **Via Dolorosa**. According to tradition, its starting point is the fortress Antonia where Pilate resided, and its terminus is no other than the place of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. As, however, that church is within the city walls, while the Evangelists speak of the place where our Lord was crucified as outside the city and “nigh unto it,” many reject the traditional site of Calvary, and consider the hill lying without the present wall, a little to the northeast of the Damascus gate, as the place of our Lord’s crucifixion. But as it is agreed on all hands, that the present city wall does not correspond exactly with the wall of Jerusalem in our Lord’s time, it is possible that the old city wall did not actually include the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and in point of fact, no conclusive argument, archæological or otherwise,<sup>1</sup> has yet been brought forward against the traditional place of Calvary. Admitting, therefore, that the general course of the road followed by Jesus is correctly indicated

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Fouard, vol ii, p. 316, footnote 1; Andrews, pp. 577-588; and also the article **Calvaire** in Vigouroux, Dictionnaire de la Bible.

by tradition, the **Via Dolorosa** was about one-third of a mile in length.

2. **Christ Bearing His Cross.** After the final sentence had been pronounced, our Lord was clothed again in His own garments, and He soon started for the place of execution, called **Golgotha** from its skull-like appearance. He was led by a Roman centurion — to whom tradition gives the name of Longinus — and was surrounded by four soldiers, in the same manner as the two malefactors who accompanied Him, and whose execution had been decided on this great festival, to inspire with awe the Jewish multitudes. After the Roman custom, Jesus had to bear His own instrument of torture, a cross, most likely the *crux immissa*, or Latin cross †, as represented in early paintings. Whether the *Title*, or white wooden tablet bearing the superscription which stated our Lord's offence, was borne before Him, hung upon His neck, or already fixed to the cross, cannot be defined.

Our Lord's cross was indeed of sufficient size and weight to support the body of a man, but it was not the lofty and massive object which we often picture to ourselves. Yet it soon proved too heavy a burden for the physical strength of Jesus, exhausted by His long agony in the Garden, by the barbarous treatment He had endured between the two meetings of the Sanhedrim, and chiefly by the scourging and crowning of thorns of the early morning. Patiently and slowly He moved up to the western city gate, accompanied by a countless multitude ; but there, as He sunk under His burden, the soldiers caught sight of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was just coming from the country, and whom they recognized as a stranger by his dress, and they at once compelled him to bear the cross after our Lord. At this moment also, the women who had followed with the populace, coming closer to Him, raised their lamentations, but Jesus bade them not to weep over Him, but over themselves and over their children.

## § 2. CALVARY.

1. **The Execution.** Finally Calvary was reached, where the Son of God was to undergo the most ignominious and most painful of punishments. Crucifixion was ever regarded by the nations among which it was in use, as a most shameful punishment, and among the Romans in particular, it was generally reserved for slaves and foreigners. In the eyes of the Jews, one dying on the cross was accursed by God (cfr. Deuter. xxi, 23), and this is why our Lord's enemies had been so anxious to secure for Him a punishment calculated to destroy forever His pretensions to the Messianic dignity. To this peculiar shame of the crucifixion were added sufferings of the most intense character, and which terminated always after many hours, often after several days of cruel agony (cfr. *Smith*, Bible Dictionary, art. Crucifixion).

It was in fact to render these dreadful sufferings less unendurable, that according to existing custom, a draught of wine mingled with myrrh was offered to our Lord before He was nailed to the cross; but Jesus refused to drink this stupefying potion, because He wished to experience fully the torments of His crucifixion. The crucifixion itself being a mode of execution familiar to their contemporaries, is left undescribed by the Evangelists, but from various authors who speak of the execution of criminals by the cross, we may infer that our Lord's crucifixion was carried out as follows: Whilst the cross was being placed in the ground, our Redeemer was stripped of His garments, and with only a linen cloth about His loins, was lifted up by means of ropes to the *Sedile*, or little projection midway upon the right post of the cross. Having sat upon the *Sedile*, Jesus stretched out His arms to be tied with cords to the transom, and then His hands and feet<sup>1</sup> were nailed to the cross, four nails being

<sup>1</sup> That both our Lord's hands and feet were nailed to the cross, is plainly inferred from St. Luke xxiv, 39, 40, and from a unanimous tradition applying to Jesus the words of Psalm xxi, 17. Cfr. *Fouard*, vol. ii, p. 325, footnote 6.



most probably used for the purpose. Of course, a similar treatment was inflicted on the two malefactors who were crucified, the one on the right, and the other on the left of Jesus.

To complete our Lord's crucifixion, there remained only one thing to be done, namely: to set up above His head, the *Title* written by Pilate in Latin, Greek and Aramaic, to indicate the nature of the offence for which our Savior was thus punished. The wording of this *Title*, which apparently declared Jesus the true King of the Jews, was naturally objected to by the Jewish leaders, but to their remonstrances Pilate simply answered by the legal formula: "What I have written, I have written."

**2. On the Cross.** Whilst the four soldiers in charge of our Lord's execution divided among themselves His garments, the great body of the people seems to have remained silently gazing upon Him, and only those who had borne false testimony against Him, now mocked at Jesus, wagging their heads and repeating their calumnious accusations. Soon, however, the Sanhedrists joined in, congratulating themselves with loud and scornful insolence upon their success, and they actually communicated their feelings of hatred and scorn not only to the ignorant Roman soldiers, but also to the people at large and to the very malefactors agonizing by the sides of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Apparently but a small group of those who witnessed our Lord's agony on the cross, among whom of course were His Mother and His beloved disciple, continued to sympathize with Him and to give Him external proofs of their intense grief.

Meanwhile Jesus had but feelings of compassion and love for those around Him, as is proved by three of the *seven words* placed on His dying lips by the inspired narrators.

<sup>1</sup> As to the question whether both malefactors or only one of them reviled our Lord, cfr. Fouard, vol. ii, p. 332, footnote 3; Andrews, p. 556.



The first was a prayer for forgiveness in behalf of His very enemies; the second held out a magnificent reward to the repentant malefactor, whilst by the third, He tenderly intrusted Mary and John to their mutual loving care.

It is probable that during the miraculous darkness which set in at noon, Jesus suffered in silence, and that he uttered the other four words only when it had ceased. The third word evidenced the incomprehensible anguish of His soul, and the fourth the intolerable thirst which consumed Him. By the sixth word, He solemnly declared His redeeming work consummated, and in consequence, with the seventh, a final recommendation of His soul to His Father, "He gave up the ghost."

At this same moment, prodigies attested the dignity of the Person who had just breathed His last. The veil of the Temple — the one which separated the Holy, from the Most Holy, Place — was rent from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were torn asunder; the graves were opened, and "many bodies of the saints that had slept arose." No wonder then, that in presence of some of those stupendous signs, the Roman centurion exclaimed, "Indeed this man was the Son of God," and the Jewish multitude "returned striking their breasts."

**3. The Burial.** Whilst Jesus, the Lamb of God and the High Priest of the New Law, was consummating His sacrifice on Mount Calvary, the Jewish priests had been offering their usual sacrificial lamb on Mount Moriah. As soon as their sacrifice was over, they hurried to Pilate, requesting him to hasten the death of the crucified that their corpses might be taken down before the beginning of the Sabbath, that is, before sunset. Pilate agreed at once to their request, for he was well aware that the Roman custom of leaving the bodies of crucified criminals without burial had been expressly modified in favor of the Jews, whose Law commanded

that all such should be buried before night. According to his directions, the soldiers broke the legs of the malefactors who had been crucified with our Lord, in order to hasten their death, but when on the point of doing the same to Jesus they found Him already dead, they did not break any of His bones; one of them simply pierced our Lord's side with his spear. Thus was the actual death of our Savior put beyond all doubt, for the inflicting of the wound was immediately followed by a flow of blood and water;<sup>1</sup> thus also were fulfilled two prophetical passages of the Old Testament (Num. ix, 12; Zach. xii, 10).

Meantime, a disciple of Jesus and a man of wealth, the Sanhedrist *Joseph* of Arimathea—a town probably to be identified with *Ramleh*<sup>2</sup>—had come to Pilate to obtain the body of Jesus. The Roman procurator had not the least objection to grant a private burial for a man whom he had so often proclaimed innocent; but as crucified criminals survived much longer their execution, he first ascertained from the centurion in charge of our Lord's crucifixion that Jesus was really dead, and then he freely granted the request of Joseph. Having purchased fine linen, Joseph repaired promptly to Golgotha, where he was joined by Nicodemus, one of his colleagues and fellow-disciples, who brought about a hundred pounds of spices wherewith to embalm the body of his Master. Together, they took down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, the folds of which they sprinkled with myrrh, aloes and other spices, conveyed it hastily into a garden near the place of the crucifixion, and laid it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock, and belonging to Joseph; finally, having rolled a great stone to the entrance, they departed.

Holy women who had been devoted to Jesus during His lifetime, and who now witnessed His hasty burial, carefully

<sup>1</sup> Whilst most commentators regard this flowing of blood and water as supernatural, many prefer to explain it by the separation of the blood of the heart into its red and white parts, a separation which naturally takes place after death.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. *Armathie* in *Vigouroux*, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*.

noticed the place where He was laid, and returning promptly to the Holy City, they purchased spices and ointments for a more perfect embalming of our Lord's sacred Body, after the Sabbath was past.

Apparently, it was all over with the Messianic pretensions of Jesus whose remains now lay lifeless in the sepulchre. And yet His enemies, remembering His prophetic words about rising on the third day, preferred to take precaution against all possible contingencies. The very morning of their great Paschal Sabbath, they therefore repaired to Pilate and obtained from him permission that the sepulchre should be made secure until the third day. Accordingly, the door of the sepulchre was carefully sealed, and Roman soldiers intrusted with the charge of watching the tomb of Jesus.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE RISEN LIFE. (TIME, FORTY DAYS.)

§ 1. THE RESURRECTION.<sup>1</sup> (MATT. XXVIII, 1-15; MARK XVI, 1-11; LUKE XXIV, 1-12; JOHN XX, 1-18.)

#### 1. Our Lord's Resurrection Entirely Unexpected.

The day which followed the burial of Jesus was a day of exulting triumph for His enemies. Without the least popular tumult, they had arrested, tried and sentenced Jesus and had caused Him to pass in the eyes of the public for a blasphemer justly condemned to death by the highest authorities of the land. He had undergone a most shameful and most cruel death hard by the walls of the Holy City, and countless multitudes had seen Him hanging upon the cross as a criminal accursed by God. His immediate followers were dispersed, and a Roman guard watched over His sealed tomb. What appearance was there that He should be heard of again, except as "a seducer," that is, as one of the many unsuccessful adventurers who had excited and disappointed the hopes of a credulous people? In this frame of mind, our Lord's enemies never entertained seriously the thought that His words about His future Resurrection could prove to be true.

Meantime, the disciples of Jesus were wholly disheartened by the ignominious sufferings and death of Him whom they

<sup>1</sup> The differences noticeable between the four Evangelists in their accounts of our Lord's Resurrection, however great and numerous, cannot be supposed to impair the historical value of the Gospel narrative of the Resurrection. Cfr. Fouard, vol. ii, p. 395, sq. : Fillion, St. Matt., p. 562 ; Andrews, pp. 589-612.

had hoped should be the Redeemer of Israel (Luke xxiv, 20, 21). During these hours of discouragement and stupor, it never came to their minds that since everything had so far come to pass as He had foretold, His arising from the tomb, so distinctly predicted by Him, would also come to pass. In point of fact, they so completely lost sight of His prophetic words in this respect, that when the first reports of our Lord's resurrection reached them, they treated them as "idle tales," unworthy of credence (Luke xxiv, 11). It is plain therefore, that the disciples of Jesus did not expect His resurrection, any more than His enemies, and that if later they believed in His resurrection, they yielded assent only to the strongest and clearest evidence.

2. **The Visits to the Sepulchre.** The first to pay a visit to the tomb of Jesus, on the first day of the week, were the holy women who desired very much to complete the embalming of their Lord. They started from Jerusalem as early as possible on that Sunday morning<sup>1</sup> (John xx, 1; Matt. xxviii, 1), not knowing that the sepulchre of their Master had been sealed during the course of the Sabbath and was guarded by the Roman soldiers, so that the only difficulty which occurred to their minds, in the way of accomplishing their pious designs, was that of removing the enormous stone they had seen rolled to the entrance of our Lord's tomb. Whilst they were on their way to the sepulchre, the earthquake mentioned by St. Matthew took place, an angel descended and rolled the stone away, probably only to allow the holy women to enter, for Jesus had risen before the stone was removed.<sup>2</sup> As they approached the sepulchre, they saw the stone rolled away, and one of them, Mary Magdalen, who naturally inferred that the body of her Lord

<sup>1</sup> It is most probable that in chap. xxvii, 1, St. Matthew refers not to Saturday *evening*, but to Saturday *night*, when that night was already well spent, and consequently toward daybreak on Easter Sunday. Cfr. **Fillion, Meyer** and other commentators.

<sup>2</sup> **Fouard**, vol. ii, p. 352, footnote 3.

had been taken away by the Jews, ran in deep excitement to announce it to Peter and John.

As at this moment, the angel was not actually sitting on the removed stone, and the soldiers had already departed, the other women approached nearer and soon entered the sepulchre. There they met angels, one of whom, calming their fears, told them that Jesus was risen and bade them announce that He would meet His disciples in Galilee; whereupon, the holy women left the sepulchre and saying nothing to the strangers whom they met by the way, they hastened to find those for whom their message was intended.

Soon after their departure, Peter and John warned by Mary Magdalen, come running with all speed, soon enter the open sepulchre, examine everything, believe in our Lord's resurrection<sup>1</sup> and then return home, whilst Mary Magdalen, who had followed them back to our Savior's tomb, remained behind weeping.

Meantime, the Roman guards, who at first had been struck with terror by the appearance of the angel who rolled the stone away from the door of the sepulchre, not only fled, they also felt the need to report to the chief priests for their breach of duty, and to exculpate themselves, they detailed all that had occurred. At this news, a meeting of the Sanhedrim was convened, wherein it was resolved to conceal by every means, the miraculous disappearance of the body of Jesus. Accordingly the chief priests and ancients gave heavy bribes to the soldiers, who were thereby induced to affirm that whilst they were sleeping, our Lord's body had been carried away by His disciples, and this story industriously spread by the Jewish leaders soon obtained general credence among the Jewish multitude.

## § 2. SUCCESSIVE APPARITIONS OF JESUS.

### 1. Apparitions on the Day of the Resurrection.

The first of our Lord's apparitions recorded in the Gospels

<sup>1</sup> See **Fillion**, *St. Jean*, p. 365; **Fouard**, *ibid*, p. 354, footnote 2.

occurred in favor of Mary Magdalen, whom an intense sorrow detained in the garden, and near the sepulchre of Jesus, even after the return of Peter and John to the Holy City. Absorbed in her grief, and not expecting to see our risen Savior, she at first mistook Him for the gardener, but when Jesus pronounced her name, she at once recognized the well-known tones of His voice, and she exclaimed, "My Master!" In her transports of joy she wished to detain Him that she might express to Him all her feelings of loving gratitude, but Jesus would not allow it;<sup>1</sup> He bade her go and say to His disciples, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God" (John xx, 11-17).

The second apparition of our Lord was granted to the other women mentioned in St. Matthew xxviii, 1, who had the inestimable privilege of kissing His feet in mark of reverent worship, and to whom He gave this message, "Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see Me" (Matt. xxviii, 9-10). It should be noticed that up to this time Jesus had appeared only to women, and that this was deemed to our Lord's disciples quite sufficient to question the reality of His Resurrection (cfr. Luke xxiv, 24).

We have no details respecting the third apparition of Jesus; it is simply stated that He "appeared to Simon," and the fact seems to have been the starting point of the belief of some disciples (cfr. Luke xxiv, 33, 34).

Our Lord's fourth apparition on this glorious day of His Resurrection, is on the contrary recorded quite at length by St. Luke xxiv, 13-35. As two of His disciples were going to **Emmaus**—a town which cannot be identified with certainty in the present day, but about seven or eight miles from Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>—Jesus joined them without being recognized by them. During the conversation which ensued, they stated their own discouraging views about the events of the

<sup>1</sup> About the various reasons assigned by commentators to this unwillingness of Jesus to be detained by Mary Magdalen, cfr. **Fillion**, St. Jean, p. 368, sq.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. **Andrews**, pp. 614-619.



preceding week and those of the present day, and then it was that our Lord taught them from the Scriptures that the Christ should "suffer these things and so to enter into His glory." It was only when, being at table with them, "He took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them,"<sup>1</sup> that they recognized Jesus, who at the same moment vanished out of their sight. That very evening they returned to Jerusalem and told the apostles what had occurred.

"Whilst they were speaking these things" Jesus appeared for the fifth and last time on the day of His Resurrection. As He stood suddenly in their midst, the ten apostles present — Thomas was then absent — were greatly disturbed, so that to convince them that they did not simply see a spirit, He allowed them to see and touch His hands and feet, and He ate before them; then He gave them power to remit and retain sins (John xx, 19-23; Luke xxiv, 36-43).

**2. Apparitions up to the Ascension.** A week elapsed, and our Lord appearing for the sixth time found the apostles still in Jerusalem, probably in the upper room where He had celebrated the Last Supper. This time Thomas was present, and as He heard Jesus bidding him to examine for himself as he had desired to do, he felt fully convinced of our Savior's Resurrection, and he therefore exclaimed "MY LORD AND MY GOD!" This fervent act of faith in our Lord's resurrection and divinity was praised by Jesus, who then added: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed!" (John xx, 24-29).

At length, all the apostles being convinced that Jesus was truly risen, complied with His often repeated directions to repair to Galilee. The first recorded apparition of our Lord in that province occurred by the Lake of Gennezareth. He

<sup>1</sup> Whether Jesus consecrated the bread is a matter of discussion among Biblical scholars. Cfr. **Fillion**, *St. Luc*, p. 408; **Dehaut**, vol. iv; **Fouard**, vol. ii, p. 362; **Benedict XIV**, *de festis Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, vol. i, p. 459, sq. The opinion that our Lord repeated here what He had done at the Last Supper, is more probable.



appeared to seven of His disciples, who, in company with Peter, had spent the whole night in unsuccessful efforts to catch fishes, and He bade them cast their net on the right side of the ship. This they did, and their obedience was at once rewarded by an abundant draught of fishes similar to the one granted to them during our Lord's mortal life (cfr. Luke v, 3, sq.). The beloved disciple was the first to recognize Jesus, and he said so to Peter who, with his usual impetuosity cast himself into the sea and came to his Master without delay. It was also on this memorable occasion, that Christ, having asked three times Peter "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?" invested him with the supreme pastoral office in the Christian Church, and foretold to him the manner of his death, a thing which Jesus declined to do when this same disciple inquired about the future of St. John (cfr. John xxi, 1-23).

Our Lord's next apparition in Galilee occurred on a mountain, which He Himself had indicated beforehand, but which is not named in the Gospel narrative. The eleven were present — probably with some other disciples — and they received from Him to whom "all power was given in heaven and on earth" their great commission to teach and baptize all nations, fully sure that their Master would be with them "all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 16-20).<sup>1</sup>

The last apparition of Jesus before His Ascension was granted to all the apostles who were gathered together once more in Jerusalem, probably in the *upper room*. The festival of Pentecost was not far distant and they were bidden "stay in the city," till they should "be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv, 44-49).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The apparition of Jesus "to five hundred brethren at once" which is mentioned by St. Paul (I Cor. xv, 6), took place probably also in Galilee; the place where occurred the apparition to St. James mentioned only in the same Epistle (chap. xv, 7), is a mere matter of conjecture.

<sup>2</sup> With regard to the manner in which St. Mark and St. Luke seem to connect directly our Lord's Resurrection with His Ascension, cfr. **Andrews**, pp. 634-637.

## § 3. THE ASCENSION (MAY 18, A. D. 30).

1. **Time and Place.** For forty days our risen Savior had lingered on this earth, appearing time and again to His chosen witnesses, and now the time had come when He was to withdraw entirely His visible presence from them. The place from which He chose to take His final departure was a spot on "the Mount of Olives" (Acts i, 12), apparently on its eastern slope in view of Bethany (Luke xxiv, 50) and about three quarters of a mile from the Holy City (Acts i, 12). A very old tradition, however—it goes back to the second century of our era—places our Lord's Ascension on the western side of Mount Olivet and upon its central summit; and this traditional site is not yet entirely disproved.<sup>1</sup>

2. **Our Lord's Last Words and Actions.** It was the feeling of the apostles when Jesus led them out of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, that something great was at hand, and as their national expectations of a Messianic temporal rule had revived with the certainty of their Master's Resurrection, "they asked Him, saying: 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'" This question proves clearly how little they had realized our Lord's teachings about the nature of His kingdom, and how much they needed the light of the Holy Spirit to understand the very nature of their own mission after the departure of their Master. The answer of Jesus was such as not to hurt their feelings, and yet such as to prepare their minds for their real mission; the coming of His kingdom they had to leave to His Father's care, and their own mission of witnesses of His Resurrection, Divinity, teachings, etc., they would courageously discharge for the benefit of all nations, after they had received the power of the Holy Ghost (Acts i, 6-8).

Meantime, our Lord had reached with them the Mount of the Ascension; there, lifting up His hands He rose from

<sup>1</sup> See V. Guerin, *La Terre Sainte*, vol. i. p. 112, sq. . Fillion, *St. Luc*, p. 415.

their sight and slowly disappeared in a cloud, "and was carried up to heaven" (Luke xxiv, 50, 51) where "He sitteth on the right hand of God" (Mark xvi, 19).

#### CONCLUSION.

With this narrative of the Ascension, we naturally bring to a close the **Outlines** of our Lord's life. Our study, however rapid, of the facts narrated in the canonical Gospels proves to evidence that Jesus was not simply an extraordinary man, a wonderful teacher and a powerful worker of miracles, He was also "the Word made flesh," the very Son of God sent by the eternal Father to lay down His life for the redemption of the world. On the one hand, the circumstances of His birth, the miracles He performed, the title of "*Son of Man*" He so constantly assumed, His distinct claim to Jewish kinship and Messiahship, together with His perfectly sinless life, prove him to be the long expected Messiah; on the other hand, His repeated affirmations of equality with the Almighty, His own positive and solemn declaration before the Sanhedrim that He was the "*Son of God*" in the strictest sense of the word, and indeed, His general attitude during His public life, demand that every candid inquirer into His Life and Character believe Him to be the Son of God, "that believing, he may have life in His name" (John xx, 31).



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CENTRAL RESERVE

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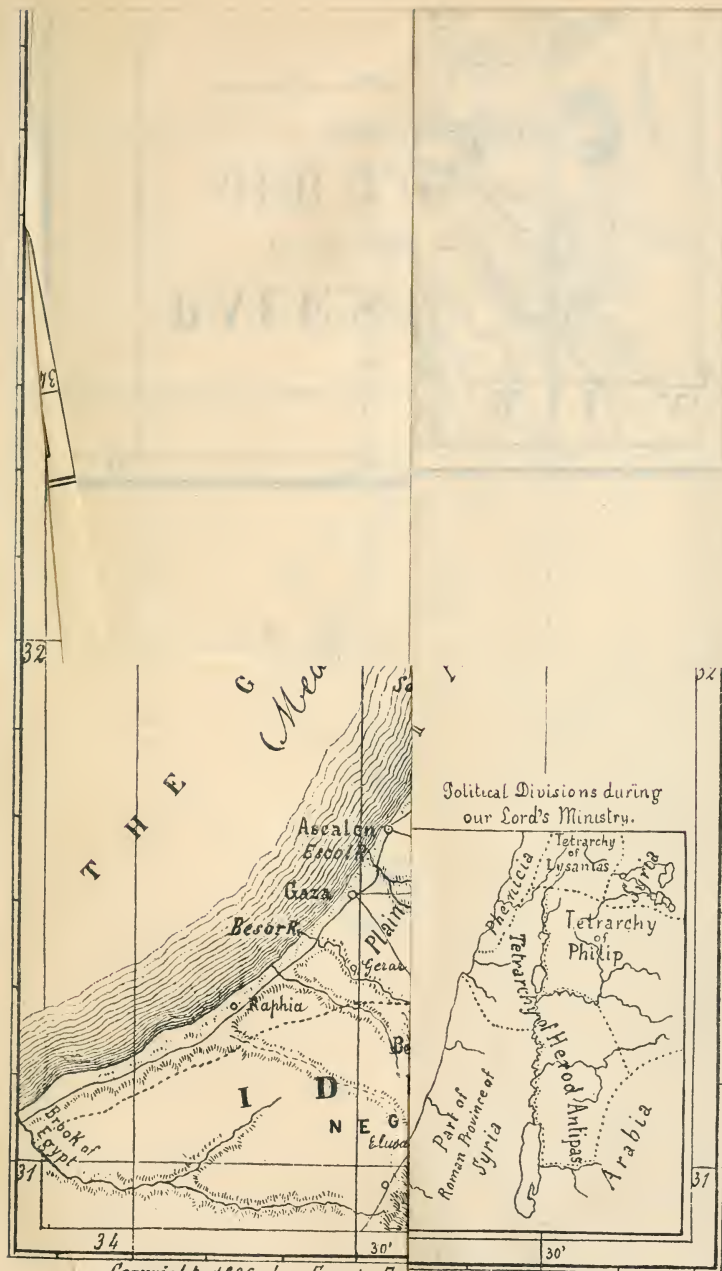


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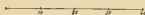
J. J. Scannell Del.

# PALESTINE

IN THE TIME OF

## OUR LORD

By Rev J. C. Cogol J. J.



Political Divisions during  
our Lord's Ministry.



















